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The Preacher and the People

FRANCIS JOHN McCONNELL
Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church

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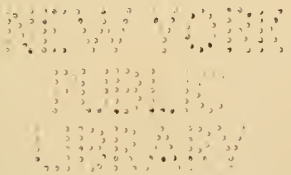
TO
MY MOTHER

WHO, THROUGH HER HUSBAND AND SONS,
HAS SPOKEN IN MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED
YEARS OF METHODIST PREACHING



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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS little volume is the substance of three lectures delivered at De Pauw University, Greencastle, Indiana, in April, 1921, on the Matthew Simpson Foundation for lectures on preaching, a lectureship made possible by the generosity of the daughters of Bishop Simpson. The book deals only with the minister as preacher. In these days a successful church requires much more than preaching. It demands the trained services of educational directors, of church visitors, of highly specialized staffs of institutional workers. In all of these I thoroughly believe, but I do not deal with them here. These lectures are concerned almost solely with the work of the church as that work is carried forward by preaching.

My thanks are due to Dr. George Richmond Grose, President of De Pauw University, for the opportunity to deliver the addresses and for innumerable kindnesses shown me on the occasion of their delivery.

1. POPULAR PREACHING

I

WHAT WE MEAN BY POPULAR PREACHING

A DISTINGUISHED professor of sociology some time ago announced as his opinion that no popular preaching can be honest. We all know at once the preaching the professor had in mind—the type that expresses itself in uttering what will please the people, or will entertain them, or say only what they want said. This is what altogether too many of us have in mind when we speak of popular preaching.

There is another sense, however, in which the word "popular" can be used as applied to preaching, and it is with the latter sense that we shall deal in these lectures. If the present-day world-wide movement toward increasing popular influence—if not control—is to continue through fields in which the people are interested at all, we must take more and more account of the people as people; that is to say, as units in audiences, congregations, churches, and denominations. We need not be reminded that people exist only as persons. Everybody knows that; but it is becoming a fact of in-

creasingly common knowledge that persons assembled together as congregations and thinking together as churches and denominations are not quite the same as those same persons acting as isolated, or separate, individuals. The late Dr. Figgis once said that no man joins a church without becoming a new creature just by the fact that he joins a church, whether he becomes adequately evangelized or Christianized or not. The man enters into a new set of relations from those he knows as a separate person, and these relationships are likely to draw out of him a new set of activities. Beyond all this is the duty of the church to-day in shaping that force of public opinion which we look to for changes in social and national and international life, that public opinion which is not merely the sum of thoughts of individuals but something more organic. It is reported that Phillips Brooks used to say that during the afternoon services at Trinity Church, at the season of year when the light would become a little dim before he had finished speaking, he would lose sight of the individuals in the audience and there would seem to be before him one composite face—the face of an audience, a congregation, a church. Much of the power of Phillips Brooks lay in his ability to speak *to* the common man in each of us. Moreover,

he spoke not to the common man as the average, or common denominator of his congregation. He appealed to men raised to a higher collective power as worshipers rather than to men as separate units. Under Phillips Brooks Trinity Church was a popular institution in a deeper sense than we sometimes consider. If all this seems to make of a group of people something beyond and above persons composing the group, may we say that we wish to use the word "popular" as applying to people "just as we find them," or the "plain people," or the "man in the street"?

In this emphasis on popular force Abraham Lincoln uttered the charmed phrase, *"of the people, by the people, for the people."* The words have become hackneyed and trite through too glib repetition. Suppose we take them, if we can, as if we were hearing them for the first time, and ask ourselves in what manner the pulpit of the church can be of the people, and by the people, and for the people; that is to say, in what sense does the pulpit belong to the people? At what must preaching aim? How can preaching put people in possession of the truth to which they have claim? Do the people of a church or a congregation speak through preaching? In what terms must the preacher

speak if he is to minister to the masses of mankind? These general questions will be in our minds during this brief series of addresses.

We may as well confront at the outset the critic who tells us that if preaching is to deal with people, we do not need a professional group of ministers. People, we are told, are not interested in theology, or scientific biblical study, or elaborately refined organizations or rituals. People want life. A socialistic critic of all existing social institutions once remarked that in the reorganized social state there will be no class of professional priests or preachers. Such persons as may be interested in religious matters will informally meet together and call upon some one of their number to talk to them, or they will one after another rise and speak what may happen to occur to them. This, according to the critic, is the only religious service that can be popular in the fundamental sense—and this service vacates the office of trained minister at once.

Such criticism as this—be it noticed—is a survival from a conception of social organization fast passing out of date. A few years ago popular development was supposed to be sure to take on the form of one mass movement reaching into everything. The people as a whole would pass judgment on everything,

and would thus directly make their control effective. The emphasis to-day, on the other hand, is on the people as working through many and diverse groups, the groups themselves being measurably self-determining and making up in the final total an organism rather than a mass. So that if some fancied social Utopia were sprung upon us over night, the next Sunday would probably see the religiously minded getting together to hold a meeting, and after the meeting appointing a committee to provide for further meetings. Thus we would see them on the highroad to a permanent organization and the establishment of a ministry of men set apart to serve the organization.

The above criticism too forgets that we at present have the religious service that our socialistic friend suggests, and that it does not altogether meet the need. Almost every church holds meetings in which a leader may call upon anyone present for discussion of religious problems, or in which anyone can rise and speak as he pleases. Prayer meetings are such services, and it is a desperate problem in many quarters to keep them alive. Prayer meetings, or meetings in which anyone can feel free to take part, are indeed of value, but their value is mostly to those who take part. One reason

why it is so difficult to get support for a prayer meeting is that hearers want discussions founded on thoughtful and skilled preparation—and the ordinary midweek service is not given to just such discussion. The prayer meeting that does best is the one in which the program is most thoroughly thought out, in which the extemporaneous element is kept to a wholesome minimum.

It is recognized to-day that popular institutions must stand or fall largely with their reliance upon experts. Division of labor rules in the sphere of religious effort as well as elsewhere, and division of labor makes experts. We can hardly defend provision for the expert in religious service which sets apart specialists to do all the praying for the people, or to hold chief means of access to salvation, or to monopolize in themselves the virtues of godliness. That would be priestcraft indeed. We are speaking now of the presentation of truth in preaching, and the presentation of truth implies much that can be achieved only by the trained and practiced mind.

By the way, it is a strange notion that the people distrust experts. On the contrary, one of the shortest and quickest paths to popularity has always been through expertness. Historians sometimes say that the American

emphasis on equality came out of the early frontier days when every man was approximately the equal of every other man. In the terrible struggle with forest and swamp and beast and savage only two tools were at hand—the ax and the rifle. All men were alike equal before a daily possibility of a tragic fate. There was equality too in that men resented any assumption of overlordship by their fellows. Every man thought he was about as well fitted to rule as any other, and there was a feeling among the hardy frontiersmen of good-humored adequacy to or superiority to official tasks. So that when Andrew Jackson, the exemplar of that popular sovereignty which preached the equality of every man to every other, raised the cry of claiming the spoils of office as the right of the victor he voiced the feeling of the frontiersmen about offices. Offices were good things to be enjoyed. If they were serious responsibilities, one man could discharge them as well as another. We would woefully misread that pioneer notion of popular equality if we said, however, that it had no place for the expert. In the handling of the ax and the rifle there were experts whose prodigies of skill were repeated in the frontier story as long as the frontier itself lasted. Anybody might be expert enough to fill an of-

fice. Not everybody was as expert in reading forest signs, or in tracking wild beasts or Indians, or in extricating himself from apparently hopeless plights as was Daniel Boone or Andrew Jackson. Nowhere has the expert received more honor than in those early pioneer days out of which the contempt of the expert in American life is supposed to have arisen.

Moreover, there were experts in public speech in those same days. The pioneer preachers became masters of an oratory all their own and attained that mastery by devoting their whole time and strength to preaching. If we were to pick out an expertism as distinctive as any, we could find it in the preaching of the circuit-riders in the day when, we are told, the characteristic doctrine of the frontier was that any man was as good as any other. No: we are not to turn our backs on an expert ministry in urging a more and more deeply popular preaching. Just an instant's reflection shows us that one road to genuine desert of public favor is through the development of expert skill. So long as his fellow man does not attempt to lord it over him by airs of superiority, the ordinary man, the plain man whom we think of as the source of popular movements, is likely to give that fellow man unstinted admiration for skill in any direc-

tion, including public speech. One element in the power of many an orator is his command over the admiration of the man who cannot himself speak effectively to a group, for the man who can thus speak.

There is point in the criticism of the trained minister, but the point holds generally only against those who become technical and overspecialized. The overspecialized expert is the one who loses sight of his ends in the use of his means, who keeps his instruments so constantly in the foreground that he seems to forget what the instruments are for. When men say of such preachers that they are "dry" the criticism means that the preachers have somehow lost life. What groups of Christians assembled to hear preaching most desire is that the preacher shall refresh them into life. The ordinary experiences of daily life are likely to result in the evaporation of faith. Faith disappears as did the oil in the lamps of the virgins—it burns out. If a preacher can address one hundred, or ten hundred, hearers every Sunday and send them away from his preaching "feeling better," "braced up," "refreshed," "quickened" in the higher ranges of their living, he has performed well his main task. This is why there is sometimes so large a demand for young men in the pulpit—just because they

are young. They are full of life. People catch the life and are invigorated thereby. The sad feature is that the life of the preacher who is lively merely because he is young, whose life is the springing buoyancy of youth itself, so often ceases to be lively when he grows older. It might almost be said that the problem of training the preacher for popular effectiveness is that of keeping him young, or of increasing his youth as the years go by. For such spiritual youth is possible. When we speak of the preacher as an expert we refer chiefly to expertness in getting hold of inner springs of life. The preacher must be toward himself a wise physician or a wise trainer. He must avoid all that cuts into the fountains of life. For the people demand life, and the essential in serving people is to bring them life, if we are to be followers of Him who came that men might have life and might have it abundantly. This does not mean that the lively young preacher who puts in his time scampering through the fields with "our young people" is necessarily the worthiest fountain of religious life, for there are higher forms of life than this.

II

A WORD ABOUT ORIGINALITY

It is the task of the preacher to put people in possession of what they should have by right, to give them what is their own, in other words. The life which is in Christ is theirs. The preacher must see that they get that life in so far as the life can be communicated in preaching. We limit ourselves to preaching, but that does not mean that we forget that, after all, it is the preacher's total personal force which counts. We will try not to forget that it is the man back of the preaching who makes the preaching go. When I was a young minister I prepared a sermon with all the care possible to me at the time. As I now recall, I wrote the sermon in full, and then most carefully revised and rewrote. My people were only mildly interested. A little later an older preacher came into the neighborhood who preached in my pulpit on a theme somewhat similar to mine. I had to admit to myself that, judged by any standard of effectiveness, the older man's sermon held the attention of the people more closely than had mine. I had to ad-

mit also that as far as formal preparation went the older man's sermon was not as well wrought out as mine—and the whole outcome was a puzzle to me. With the advancing years, however, I have seen that the difference lay in that there was more back of the older man's utterance than back of mine. There were fifty years more of Christian experience, for one thing. I may have had the more accurately shaped homiletic bullet, but the older preacher had the greater driving power. If I had been wisely advised, I would have been told that it was not my fault that I was not fifty years older than I was. All of which is to be kept in mind. We cannot make people older than they are, or other persons than they are. We know that the bigger the man the bigger the preaching: but we are now taking preachers just as we find them and are asking how they can make the most of their capabilities and opportunities for the preaching of the truth.

We may think for the moment about originality as the secret of much power of religious leadership. What is originality? Surely not the ability to say things remarkable for smartness—or queerness—or even to say things which no one has ever thought of before. Sometimes the greatest originality shows itself in expressing what almost everybody has at least

half thought of before. Originality starts from so working ideas into ourselves that when they come forth from us they move again as from a new origin. All depends, at the outset, on how much in the world of spiritual force we can seize and make our own. The energy of a stream depends on the extent to which it takes advantage even of the shape of a continent to merge rainfalls into its own current. Or, to speak in terms of life, the physical force of a man depends not upon any absolute origination of powers in himself but upon the degree to which his organism can transform into energy the food which he consumes. The preacher must make spiritual energies his own by a similarly intensely vital seizure.

It was said of a leader in a realm which called for superior technical knowledge that he had the power to "digest his knowledge out of sight" so that all trace of his knowledge as scientific information was lost in the final decision, with no suggestion of scientific terminology or of complicated process. Only the young or half-trained physician talks in the language of the professional school. The knowledge of the older expert has been digested—it has passed into him, it is part of himself. This is the difference between genuine utterance and superficial utterance.

Borden P. Bowne once said that if a thinker will make a thought his own, utterances "on the outside" will grow into utterances "from the inside." When the people rejoiced at hearing Jesus it was because he spoke with authority, not as the scribes. Jesus said things from within. The scribes talked about things on the outside.

The essential of Christianity is the doctrine of the Christlike God. If we can believe that God is like Christ, everything else worth while follows, not by the implications of strict formal logic but by the spiritual necessities of such a God. If God is like Christ, we have forthwith the right to believe in the dignity of man, man's immortality, the possibility of deliverance from evil and growth into unending power. This central truth, however, cannot be adequately preached merely by being announced to men. The gospel is indeed the good news of God, but preaching is not over with the bare pronouncement of the news. I once knew a devoted itinerant who went into every city and town of a Central America state simply announcing the gospel. He fancied that by so doing he was obeying the command whose fulfillment would bring the return of Christ in the flesh. He spoke of having "evangelized" Costa Rica, in particular.

Evangelization means the *preaching* of the good news and not the bare publishing of the news. We cannot tell how new the good news about God is, or how good it is, without preaching. The headlines of a newspaper may carry the news of a scientific discovery, or of a legislative enactment, or of a social revolution. The meaning of that announcement may exhaust the interpretative powers of scores and thousands of students. It may require a thousand books to tell what the newspaper announces in ten words, for the implications of good news have to be wrought out into clear understanding and forceful speech and effective action.

The preacher has, or is supposed to have, the good news of God; but other people may not have that news. The phrases about the Christlike God may mean nothing until they are carried out into their implications. Then they begin to show what a difference they would make for human life if they were actually believed. The working of an idea out into its implications is done, we repeat, as the preacher thoroughly makes the idea his own. A long step toward popular success in religious ministry is taken when the occupant of the pulpit shows that he has heard the good news himself. I once stood by a man in a

foreign land who was announcing to a company the names of a visiting party from America. The official was announcing correctly and politely enough, but with remoteness of interest which sometimes goes with correctness and politeness. At the utterance of a particular name the visitor announced said, "Doesn't that name call up something in your memory?" Then the mere announcer became a friend, remembering his friend's name and clasping the hand of a companion whom he had not seen for twenty years. The light of welcome in the transformed face was far beyond formal politeness. The face of the preacher sometimes likewise lights up when his word about God shows that he has himself heard the good news and that the news is in a peculiarly intimate and personal sense *his* news. We say again that the more personal a man can make his belief in God the wider social hearing he can get for his message. The more that message is his own the more he can give it to others. The more he gives it to others the more he makes it his own.

May we here enter a plea for the habit of brooding meditation by the preacher? We shall have so much to say about the need of formal effort in study that to some this little book may seem to repeat the speech of the bar-

ren homiletic manual. All the more reason, then, why we should make clear that around and through and over all the specific and methodical and systematized study should go that deep brooding which ripens knowledge into wisdom—the hours upon hours spent in holding the central themes before the mind, with the mind as it were waiting to see what will come from them, in asking and reasking the same questions, in letting the imagination, or even the fancy, carry out the implications of the theme into all directions, in unhurried movement toward a conclusion or away from a conclusion.

It is well for those of us who are trying to preach the gospel to remind ourselves that a sermon is a growth rather than a product of mechanical labor. In all that we say, then, about the mechanics of sermon-making we trust that we shall be understood to mean that we are dealing with the gospel as a living seed, with the minds of ourselves and of others as soil. The mechanical devices we conceive of as hoes or plows or harrows or pruning knives rather than as the tools of a factory. We are cultivating fields and gardens rather than building machines. For all this we have the sanction of the Master's own example. He was the sower of seed and the reaper of harvests.

If this means anything, it means that the development of the power to brood gives our minds a chance to treat the truth according to their own laws and peculiarities, to put upon the truth the peculiar tang which makes it our own. These minds of ours—ours, indeed, by all the distinctiveness of separate personal individuality—are not entirely under the direct control of our own wills. We are mysteries even to ourselves. Thoughts and feelings which bear all the marks of our own selves at times seem to have arisen outside of ourselves. Now, such ideas and impulses, flavored as they are with the feeling that they have come from a source above ourselves, are likely to be those that must carry with them, both to ourselves and to others, the tingle of living prophecy. The fact probably is that these ideas are the truest growths of our minds, made possible as we allow the minds to have their way with themselves and with the truth.

Heaven forbid that this may be taken as an advocacy of daydreaming or of letting minds merely drift along by the law of association. I once knew a preacher who said that he simply lay flat on his back and dreamed out his sermons. From the lulling, soothing effect of his sermons I am inclined to think this was true. There was certainly nothing in them to

arouse anybody's attention. What I am pleading for is something beyond that systematic, scheduled thinking which must arrive at a particular point according to time-table, something, on the contrary, which turns around an idea and gazes upon it from every angle, and which refuses to be hurried. Some mighty theme—and what is mightier than the doctrine of the Christlike God?—should be in the preacher's mind as a vine which yields fruit as the mind works like a husbandman upon the vine. Implications of central and fundamental conceptions should be allowed to ripen; but ripening is not a forced mechanical process. It is intense—this ripening process—but it is altogether natural. Ideas should mature thus naturally. Or, to employ another figure, we may refer to the wonderful suggestiveness of the passage in opening Genesis which tells us that the Spirit of the Lord brooded upon the face of the deep as a bird over her nest. That first chapter of Genesis might well be studied by the preacher as a hint about the creative mood. The purpose of the scriptural writer is to show the divine orderliness of creation, and the orderliness as coming out of the divine brooding.

The modern psychologist rightly lays stress on the activity of the subconscious self. What

arises out of these subconscious depths which seem to stir of themselves will largely depend on what we send down into them from open-eyed thinking. I once worked for hours over a mathematical proposition and finally gave it up in despair. The next day, as I was walking down the street, the solution suddenly flashed upon me. I said to myself, boy as I was, that if such were the way algebra solutions were to come, I would thereafter just let them come without any further struggle. For the next lesson the solution did not come. So I learned that purposeful thought is indispensable, but that to season or ripen that purposeful thought it is best to let the juices of the subconscious soak into it. To do this the preacher must fight against all the distracting influences in his parish that make against the brooding life, that those powers which we call collectively by the name of "time" may get a chance at his thinking. The skill which the expert in any activity has comes from just such slow ripening.

III

THE PREACHER'S USE OF THE BIBLE

It is not my purpose to try to suggest to preachers detailed schemes of study. We shall all admit, however, that the one book which it is essential for the preacher to know is the Bible. The preacher must read the Bible incessantly. He must read it with a double aim, so far as his work as a preacher is concerned, namely, to find what a passage meant for the man who wrote it, and, secondly, what the passage has of significance for men and women and children to-day.

Underneath everything in the use of the Scriptures is the resolution to learn what the scripture meant to the original writer. A preacher may make any homiletic use of a text he pleases, within the limits of good sense, if he first learns and declares the original meaning of the text. Everything must start from that open and honest declaration of what the passage first meant. After that it is legitimate for the preacher to say that the text suggests something quite different to himself, or that the biblical figure of speech warrants our

carrying out the figure to implications which the writer may not have had in mind, or that the reflection of the centuries has loaded the passage with a significance of which the author did not dream.

In learning what the scriptural passage meant to him who first wrote it the preacher is entitled to look for light in any quarter. It will be his duty especially to see what the modern methods of scientific biblical study have to teach. This does not mean that he must accept what the present-day scientific student declares to be the meaning of a particular scripture, but he ought to know what the scientific verdict is. There cannot be anything more foolish than to ignore the teachings of those who bring the scientific method to bear on the search for scriptural meanings. The scientific method, in general, has, within the past half-century, all but made over the world in which we live. It has, indeed, led to much skepticism and even materialism, but these have been more than offset by the positive good obtained. Now, the scientific method has wrought as decisive victories in the field of biblical research as anywhere else. Before long there will be general recognition of the debt of religion to that method. Science asks insistently as to what the passage meant to the

man who wrote it. Even if the author wrote miraculously that question remains. To answer the question scholars have labored over old manuscripts, excavated ancient cities, deciphered inscriptions by the thousand—in short, labored with overwhelming industry. The majority of men who have worked thus have had no other thought than to find the meaning of the scriptural revelation. The important results have been made so accessible that the humblest preacher cannot honestly claim that they are beyond his reach. How a man can think of himself as an expert worker in the Lord's field if he pays no attention to the instruments thus spread out before him is one of the major mysteries. It is possible for a man to cut a harvest of grain with the old hand-sickle, but there are better instruments made possible by the progress of science. In the end the people will lose confidence in him who does not seem to be using the best tools. The popular demand for up-to-dateness may be the itch for novelty. It is so, for example, in the demand for novelties of dress or adornment. It is not so in the demand for medical or surgical remedies or for more wholesome food or clothing. In such realms the "last word," the "latest thing," may be the word or the thing that saves a life.

We still hear occasionally, though not as often as formerly, that to introduce the scientific method into biblical study leads at once to a discriminatory judgment which puts different parts of the Scriptures on different levels, and thus introduces standards of value which may end in leaving us all at sea, to say nothing of doing away outright with the doctrine that all scripture is inspired. To which we must reply that Bible readers in all ages have done the same thing—they have made more of some Scripture passages than of others, no matter how firmly they may have insisted that all scriptural writing is alike inspired. Any Bible of a saintly mother or a devout Christian worker tells the story by revealing the parts that are well thumbed. Every devoted Bible reader makes his own Bible by selection, at least. It is folly to maintain that Bible readers put John's Gospel on a level with Ecclesiastes, or Job with Chronicles, or Paul's Epistles with Esther or Proverbs. The saints have always been radical with the Bible in that they have kept closest to the "root of the matter."

Now, modern biblical method has added to the range of the significant portions of Scripture. It has shown us the meaning—or at least *a* meaning—in passages that we once

passed by as mysteries. The difference is that we do not now need to pass them by. In the light of the fuller knowledge we understand the part that even imperfect conceptions played in leading on and up to the fuller revelation which came with Jesus. The newer methods of study have thus brought unused, or slightly used, passages of Scripture out to fuller usefulness and have even added to the usableness of the greatest passages.

The students going out from theological school have too often been of one of two classes: either they have lugged all their scientific apparatus into the pulpit with them, or they have seemed to think that the scientific method is something to be looked at and then put to one side. It is hard to tell which type does the more harm. The first type of student ought to reflect that the popular demand for anything is more for results which speak for themselves than for descriptions of the processes which bring the results. Will the reader please remember throughout these discussions that we are talking of preaching and not of Bible-class instruction? There is ample place in the church program for consideration of present-day biblical methods, but that place is in the class where questions can be asked and answered. A large part of the wretched re-

action of to-day toward antiquated biblical interpretation is due to the failure of churches to put before the layman Bible-class opportunities to become acquainted with the better methods. For the preacher, however, to lug into the sermon debatable points in biblical opinion, or to talk about processes at all except on most appropriate occasions, is about as wise as for a surgeon to describe to a patient the instrument with which he intends to operate on him. In well regulated hospitals the patient is mercifully anæsthetized before he sees the instruments! If this seems to lend itself to the claim that the ministry should be an esoteric profession with secrets all its own, we disavow any such intention forthwith. There ought not to be any secrets to be kept from anyone who desires to know. Nor are we urging any preacher to keep back from his people any part of the truth. We are simply saying that the sound and reasonable public demand in every sphere is for results and not for the discussion of processes except for those who wish such discussion. The Bible is the food of the soul. It is the business of the preacher to put the food before the people in attractive form. I know a fine establishment where most excellent food is supplied to the customers; but opposite every item on the bill of fare is

printed the exact number of the calories which a given unit of the food can be expected to yield. The figures are disconcerting and appetite-destroying. All talk about balanced rations, about proteins and starches and carbohydrates is a terrible affliction at a dinner table. This scientific truth is valuable for the housewife who presides over the cooking, but she ought not to bring the formulas to the table.

The other type of preacher makes no use of scientific method at all. So that we have from him an inaccurate representation of biblical truth which may lead off to aberration. Or, rather, he gives himself to preaching which is not fundamentally biblical. His texts are starting points to almost anywhere. If such a preacher is of lively inventiveness, or possesses a touch of poetic fancy, or is so magnetic a speaker that it does not make much difference what he says, the lack of biblical understanding may not noticeably count. We are concerned, however, with a higher grade of preaching than this if we are to meet the deeper popular needs.

There remains the group of preachers—increasing, let us trust—who get all the light they can on what a passage meant to its author and who then try to see and say what the

passage means for us to-day. In other words, they take the Bible as dealing with living men and living issues in its day and then try to make the truth live for our day. So that there comes into the preaching the accent of life, which in the end is mighty with the people. The majority on the face of this earth do not live in a make-believe world. We might say, therefore, that they ought to be lifted out of this actual world for an hour or two on Sunday and transported into the land of ideals. To be sure, they should; but woe to the preacher who brings his hearers back to earth saying, "After all, it is only dreams or fancy." The professional entertainer can carry hearers or spectators into the land of dreams, but people know such dreams for what they are and do not expect anything solid. The preacher, on the other hand, is dealing with an order of realities, above the sordid and humdrum round of prosaic activities. He is trying to make men see that there is a sky over the earth, but it must be a sky and not a painted canvas. The depths must be there, and the sun and stars must be genuine. Very truly indeed the sky we see is not the sky of the astronomer, but our sky is not delusion nor illusion. We may have to make repeated corrections as we gaze toward the heavens, but

we are dealing with something real, not with the skies of fairyland.

Whatever else the Bible may or may not be, it certainly is a record of the struggle of men grappling with substantial problems. The attempt to get at its meaning on a fact basis is a step toward imparting into our own lives the quick awareness of the real which marks the Scriptures. Reality is a fearfully overworked word, but there is no other. In this connection we may refer to the unwillingness of the biblical leaders to befool themselves, or anyone else. One difference between the Hebrews and the peoples round about was just this unwillingness of the scriptural leaders to live in a world of make-believe. There is an element of faith in all religious knowledge. We shall have occasion later to lay emphasis on the teaching of Jesus that out of the will's doing aright there comes the knowledge of God. Since we must have faith let us have a faith based not on what we think, or what we feel, but upon what we do. Throughout the Scriptures obedience leads to knowledge. Not enough emphasis has yet been placed on the opposition which appeared among the Hebrews at least as early as the time of Saul to soothsayers and witches as revealers of divine knowledge, or on the absence of reliance on

trancelike states in the biblical search for truth. When the seers of the Bible had visions the visions were something worth seeing.

There is a capacity of imagination which spends itself in painting pictures which have no touch with anything actual in the heavens or on the earth, an imagination which may at times well serve us. There is a higher imagination which starts on a basis of fact and makes the facts live, not as bare facts, but as facts suggestive of far-reaching principles. It is this type of imagination for which the preacher who would grip men where they live must seek, the type that beholds the men of the Scriptures actually living in an actual situation, and which makes those men live again in a wider relationship embodying ever-recurring problems of human experience. If we can once see these men as they were, we shall recognize them as like ourselves. It is the task of the preacher to make scriptural characters live again, that we may share their life.

IV

HELPING MEN TO UNDERSTAND

One of the most Christian words in our language is the word "help." Help does not mean doing everything for a man. It means aiding a man to make the most of his own powers. It implies one's supplementing another's own strength. Outright giving is different. To give a cripple the ability to walk might imply any degree of power up to the miraculous. To help a cripple to walk might mean the lending of an arm on which the unfortunate might lean. One of the finest New Testament characterizations of the Spirit of God is of the Spirit as Helper—supplementing our powers as we ourselves make effort to exert them to the utmost.

In putting people in possession of the truth the aim of the popular preacher should be to help, first of all to help to understand. We must never ignore the elementary axiom in psychology that a mind is not a holder of so much cubic content. The mind is not passive but active. Even when the student tells us that pictures of the outside world are photo-

graphed on the delicate tissue of the eye we must not forget that someone must see the picture, and that seeing the picture means building it in the mind by an active mental process. We can take the boy to the school, but we cannot make him think any more than we can make him eat if he will not eat. Thus almost at once we dispose of one type of authority in preaching. Dogmatism in preaching is of slight value unless it is freely assented to by the hearer. Formerly when dogmatic authority ruled everywhere even hearers in the church might take dogma hospitably, but dogma is not by its nature calculated to make men understand. We doubt if some dogma was ever intended to be understood. It was to be believed, and belief meant a bolting of intellectual food, or medicine, without much question.

No severer intellectual task is exacted of any professional expert than this of helping men to understand. Think of the different grades of intelligence in any audience, no matter how homogeneous the audience. There are children, young men and women, mature men and women, old men and women. Yet it is the task of the preacher to place before all, in practically the same statement, truth that will minister to all the lives. For this is preaching,

the setting of truth before men so that it can be appropriated for a life purpose. Every effort is to be directed toward such appropriation. For a preacher to be helpful in this task is to deserve highest praise.

The first step is to help people to understand. These addresses are intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive. May I therefore indicate two characteristics of preaching which seem to me to be always needed? They are formally contradictory though the contradiction is only apparent. I refer to the power to simplify and the power to amplify. Look first at the need for simplicity. The purpose of the preacher should be so to state his truth that the lowest normal intelligence before him will see at least the beginnings of its meaning. We are not pleading for simplicity of thought or for statement that attempts the impossible feat of rendering the whole gospel of the Christlike God intelligible at a glance. We are asking, though, for the simplicity of statement that enables even the child in the audience to see some distance into the truth.

Let not anyone imagine that we are calling for an easy achievement in urging the importance of simplicity. For simplicity everywhere costs. We have been told in a conven-

tional formula of evolution that progress is from the simple to the complex. Of course we understand that the formula is declaring that progress comes through increasing fineness of adjustment in organisms. There is, however, a progress from the complex to the simple which is equally important. At least there is a demand that the parts of which the complex is composed shall be themselves simple. The simpler a tool the better. The simpler an artistic creation the better. The simpler a statement the better. The simpler a sermon the better. Moreover, the struggle for simplicity in statement is one of the hardest of the intellectual strains.

The young minister makes a grievous mistake if he starts in to preach chiefly to what might be called the top minds of his congregation. He goes, let us assume, to a church in which he has before him Sunday after Sunday eight or ten school-teachers, two or three lawyers, a doctor or two, possibly one or two retired ministers, out of a congregation of two hundred. Suppose, now, that he keeps thinking, as he prepares his sermon, of these fifteen or twenty persons more technically educated than their fellows in the community. He asks himself if this select number will be pleased. He judges his success by the kind words they

say to him after the sermon; and if their praise is forthcoming, he may flatter himself that he is doing an intellectual grade of preaching. Indeed, the preaching may be of a noteworthy intellectual quality; but in statement at least it will not be of so high an order as if the preacher had spoken with the one hundred and fifty or one hundred and seventy-five in mind. It is not possible to move the ordinary audience by preaching chiefly to the top intellects. If, on the other hand, a man is so skilled in phrasing his truth as to make it clear to the lowliest intelligence, he benefits every intelligence above the lowliest as well. More than that, the higher the intelligence the more heartily it appreciates simplicity of statement, just as the higher artistic discernment appreciates keenly the simple in painting or sculpture. It is only the half-intelligent hearer who delights in literary or historical or scientific allusions which, he fancies, no one else in the audience can appreciate but himself.

In every sermon—with an allowance for an occasional handling of a peculiarly difficult theme—there should be some passage stating the essential thought so simply that it will be intelligible to the child of school age. By the way, this is the effective preaching to children—to beget in their minds an alert expectancy

(if the preacher is interesting at all) and to make them feel that they are part of the congregation. All this requires intellectual power in the preacher.

Now, someone is tempted to break out that our emphasis on simplicity is overdone, that nothing profound can be uttered simply. How could anyone phrase simply the nebular hypothesis, or the doctrine of evolution, or the law of diminishing return? The subject matter of religion is at least as profound as the Einstein theory of relativity, and magazines and books have only made themselves ridiculous in trying to simplify Einstein. All of which might be pertinent if the preacher were to be conceived of as an expounder of theology or philosophy. His duty, however, is quite different—that of making vital to men the life out of which theology comes. We shall never get anywhere until we see this underlying purpose of preaching. Let the preacher enrich his own life by the profoundest theological study of which he is capable, but before his congregation he must always make the return to life. To do this demands strenuous intellectual effort.

The second power which the preacher needs in helping people to understand is that of amplification. This does not mean saying

the same thing over and over again in the same way, but does mean looking at the one truth from all available angles. We assume that at the outset the preacher has chosen something worth saying, something big enough to be approached from a variety of points of view. This being the case, it is well if the preacher knows how to make the one essential thought the center around which everything marches, or the point of departure from which everything in the sermon starts and to which everything finally returns. We remind ourselves that we are dealing with the task of trying to make people understand. Few listeners in the Sunday congregation are impressed even with the simplest and clearest statement on the first putting.

In the search for efficiency we may well consent to learn from present-day advertisers and newspaper propagandists. These worthies are indeed usually children of this world, but they know how to deal with their contemporary generation. Their problem is to arouse a sustained public interest in their wares, whether the wares be material or of a more intangible category. The trick is turned by finding new and arresting ways to say the same thing until the idea finally gets through and sticks. It is astonishing how many methods these ex-

perts discover to tell us where to buy the best shoe or automobile or how to get rid of capitalists or Bolshevists. With a nobler subject matter the preacher ought to be able to develop even a finer skill in amplified presentation.

If I may be pardoned a word of reminiscence, my first sermon, delivered over a quarter of a century ago, dealt with evolution, modern biblical and social theories, all in twenty minutes. At the end I sank into the pulpit chair with the sickening query as to what there was left for the next Sunday. Since then I have learned, I trust, something of the wisdom of Father Tyrrell's shrewd comment about breaking bread to the multitudes, namely, that breaking bread is obviously intended to get the bread into small enough pieces to be used. Without irreverence it may be said also that preaching is an art of almost miraculously multiplying the pieces till the multitude is fed. The one truth is broken into many pieces by the preacher and each piece invested with a score of life-giving qualities.

Here, again, the preacher may feel that he is being asked to perform a task which is somewhat beneath his trained intellectual powers. Let him not deceive himself as to the mental force which all this requires. If he will forgive another reference to the children of the

world, let him remind himself that the talent of a first-class advertiser or propagandist is rare and costly. If we were dealing with sheer repetition, the situation would not be one calling for intense intellectuality, but in preaching the repetition must be with a difference, and it is that difference for which the preacher has to pay with the best that is in him. From the beginning the hearers may be willing to accept the preacher's statement of his fundamental proposition without disagreement. They may even ask what there is in such a proposition to discuss. Why not say it and pass on? Some of the greatest sermonic victories are won in bringing people to see the force of truths which they ordinarily accept without question. The preacher surprises such hearers into looking at the old idea from a new angle which reveals a new size, or shape, or color; and so on to the end—possibly with the listener in a state of wonder at the newness of something at which he has been looking all his life.

An acute student once told me of his satisfaction in listening to the lectures of the late Josiah Royce. In a given lecture Royce would deal with but one theme; his progress through that theme had something of the circular, scouring swing of a rising flood of waters

which advances with a whirl rather than with a direct attack. "So," said my friend, "if I don't catch him fully at the first statement, I catch him as he swings around again."

Is not life in considerable part just looking upon a few elemental truths from the changing points of view which come with spiritual ascent toward higher altitudes? If it is not too grotesque, may we not say that our spiritual ascent is like the spiral rise of some monarch of flight who sees below him always the same earth or sea but who sees it ever in a larger setting? If the preacher is to catch anything of the secret of popular ministry, he must acquire this power to help men see again and again and again the enlarging meaning of some principles they may think they understand at first glance.

V

HELPING MEN TO THINK

It would be a meager ideal, however, which would be content with merely helping men to understand. A hearer might understand and yet not adequately understand. While in all the responses of an audience to a preacher the will element of the listeners is involved, more is required for full understanding than barely the degree of attention and grasp of the speaker's thought which discerns a meaning. The preaching which helps people gets them to do everything that they can do for themselves. Hence the preacher must on his side do all in his power to help his people to think.

We have spoken in the previous chapter about the need of amplification. In their direct statement, I very much fear, my chapters will seem to be warring with one another. I may seem to be taking back in one section all that I have said earlier. Even at the risk of seeming contradiction, however, may I warn that with all his amplifying the speaker is not to amplify too much. In the development of the theme itself he should leave something to

the constructive activity of the listener. Understand, again, what preaching is, or what it is not. It is not the bare communication of fact. Facts there must be, but facts with meanings and implications. If the preacher were a scientist stating an exact formula and were to leave out one factor, the formula would not work. If he were a physician writing a prescription, it would be imperative to get everything in, and in the exact proportions. If he were a lawyer, it would be necessary to introduce the last shred of evidence. While the preacher at times makes statements like those of a scientist or a physician or a lawyer, primarily he is a life-giver, and life-giving means the calling forth of men's own powers. So that the wise preacher is not he who says everything himself. Better leave a sermon noticeably incomplete, if the hearer is thereby compelled to think out a conclusion for himself, than to allow the hearer always to quit the church saying: "That is final. That is finished. That is settled." If the issue is a practical surrender of will in consecration, the sermon should lead to finality, but we are not thinking of such surrender just now. In the etymological sense the preacher should be an educator—he should seek to lead out the possibilities of his hearers. Or if the Christian life

is fundamentally walking with God, he should try to help men to walk; he should not carry them or provide intellectual vehicles for them, or even allow them to lean too heavily on himself. It is sometimes said that the most competent executive never himself does anything that he can get anyone else to do. So it might be said that the most competent speaker will not himself say what he can get his hearers to say. This stands in need of qualification—qualification which we shall make in due time, but it does state an aspect of wisdom which should not be overlooked.

A second rule for helping hearers to think is to use stimulating figures of speech. If speech has one characteristic above another as a revealer of the common mind that characteristic is the tendency to the figurative in any utterance at all popular. Every step away from the concrete to the abstract is a step away from the people's thinking. The power of abstract utterance is, to be sure, one of the greatest gifts to the human mind, and this power is granted only to the masters; but the power over the abstract is not the only mastery which deserves to be called great. All leaders in literature as such have been masters of the concrete.

The virtue of the figure for the preacher is

that it makes a connection for his sermon with the world of things in which his hearers live. Abstract logical coherences mean little to most of us. We live among things and among people, and the very fact that one thing is related to another establishes in the mind of the hearer threads of relationship which may indeed not be logical but which are altogether vital nevertheless. For simple illustration of figurative utterance as the prolific producer of utterance from those who hear, think of an apt figure of speech in a prayer meeting as a stimulus to talk. One reason why prayer meetings are often so lifeless is that nothing in the remarks of the leader starts others to talking. There is no hook by which we can take hold. If a happy turn of phrase pricks minds into thinking, the meeting is likely to be interesting enough.

I once dropped into a noonday prayer service in a large city where the attendants were mostly day laborers just off the streets. One often hears the most striking figures of speech used in such meetings to set forth conceptions of the religious experience. The meeting of which I speak was dragging heavily until a teamster arose who emphasized the need of dying to self in order to live unto Christ. He concluded by saying that he came into the

kingdom of heaven by the "death-route." The figure did not appeal to me as extraordinarily appropriate or even elegant, but *it took*. That is to say, it caught the imagination of the crowd, and the meeting noticeably livened up.

All that I am now saying must be understood within the limitations imposed by good sense and good taste, but the effectiveness of the figurative to quicken hearers to thought and speech on their own account must not be despised. It is distressing to see a figure go on all fours, but not so distressing as not to see it go at all. If we were to drop out of Christian thinking all that has been implied by figures of speech, we should not have much left. With Christ as the Way, and the Light, and the Shepherd and the Sower, the disciples have heard from the beginning figures so suggestive that almost of themselves these figures have carried the minds of believers along to inevitable progress.

Again, the preacher must cultivate that sense of balance in utterance which enables him to put truth positively and boldly, boldly enough even to provoke a reaction in some quarters. Balance—balance—balance—how many sins of public speech are committed in thy name! Because of the excesses of the half-baked or the unripe we have been told that in

discussing spiritual themes we must keep our balance—and be sane! That word "sane" has been so abused in these latter days that any forth-right preacher of positive temperament might well consider himself offered a deadly affront in being called "sane." For balancing too often means thrusting in qualifications too trifling to be mentioned as compared with the main idea. The fact that some qualifications are even mentioned gives them a significance not inherently belonging to them. A diagnostician summoned to determine whether a patient had heart trouble would not feel it necessary to prepare his report of a serious disorder by complimenting the patient on the color of his hair or the contour of his face. Genuine balance goes straight to the center of a trouble in the effort to restore a lost equilibrium. If a boat is liable to capsize, the sudden shout to the crew is the only balanced procedure. If the house is on fire, too studied utterance is the mark of serious mental handicap. The Old Testament prophets were not particularly given to padding their sentences with the purpose of bringing all possible qualifications of any idea within the field of view. Elijah running eighteen miles in frenzy before the chariot of Ahab does not strike us as altogether sane, and yet Elijah was sane

enough to see that the conflict between the Jehovah of Israel and the Baal of Phœnicia had to be a battle to the death. If preaching means anything, it means that the preacher is dealing with themes heavily weighted with spiritual values. The preacher is not, in the pulpit at least, a judge making a decision between fine issues. The issues are comparatively simple in sermons—or they ought to be —and the sermons should be positive enough to carry the hearer along or to throw him into opposition.

We urge with all our might that this is not a plea for rashness. We are not striving for that brand of harangue or invective which splits churches. We are not sanctioning the introduction of needlessly divisive elements into preaching, but we do feel that the preaching should be strong enough either to call forth the amen from the hearer which shows that his mind is actively sanctioning, or, on the other hand, to put the hearer into the opposition which shows that his mind is fully alert. If we could have divisions under preaching without splitting congregations, the outcome would be spiritually wholesome.

Suppose, however, the preacher is mistaken; suppose he is in a particular sermon off his balance. We are not dealing with cracked

brains, but with men of training and sacrifice who have never passed through any unfortunate cerebral crises. We affirm of such men that if they honestly overstate a position, or even if they abound in contradictions, some good will result in the end by the quickening of Christian thinking, if in no other way. There is a measure of justice in the claim that the ages of controversy in the church have also been the ages of progress, provided the controversies have not been so bitter as to let in unrighteous tempers or to lead to the use of carnal weapons. For thinking is of the essence of the religious experience, and while men have been thinking they have been generating life religiously self-communicating. As for contradictions, we can never afford to drop out of our reckoning the contradictions of thinkers as a factor in progress. A student of philosophy once remarked of Kant that if Kant had himself cleared his system of contradictions, there would not have been much work for the philosophers of the one hundred years following Kant.

Finally, the preacher must have confidence in the soil into which he casts the seed which is the Word of God. He must get rid of the paternal in his relation to his hearers if he is to deal fairly with them as hearers of the word.

If the farmer did not know beforehand the course through which a grain of wheat runs after it is planted in the ground, he might see nothing but destruction in what the soil at first does with the grain, if he could behold the underground processes. Swollen, burst, torn to shreds is the seed after the properties of the soil get their chance at it; but that is not the end of the story. The harvest is the end of the story. So with the mind's attack on the word of the Truth. The Truth at first is apparently torn into shreds by the soil of the mind, the difference between soil and minds being that the minds are likely to speak out as to what is going on. Now, the preacher must not meddle too much with the consequences of his own preaching. His preaching should have consequences. One of the watchwords of modern education is "investigation by the pupil under guidance"—a fine watchword for the preacher, if he is willing to let the truth come to a harvest with which he may not wholly agree. If the preacher is patient and tolerant and commands the confidence of his people, only good can come of his stimulating the people to think. The danger is that the preacher may become scared at the results of his own preaching and attempt to stop the thought processes at some fixed limit. Then

there is a bursting-forth that may seem to him very alarming. Fundamentally, though, this is only the Christian soil insisting upon its right to deal with the Christian seed in the manner that leads to the Christian harvest.

VI

THE GUIDANCE OF RELIGIOUS FEELING

It has been our wish to arrange the themes of this section in the order of their importance, ascending constantly to higher phases. Only roughly can one phase of religious experience be called more important than another. Moreover, in dealing with thought and feeling and deed successively we are likely to fall into the fallacy that these aspects of spiritual activity are somehow separate from one another, whereas there cannot be pure thought or pure feeling or pure will. Thought, will, and feeling presuppose each the others. We can see, however, that in one or another phase the element of thought or feeling or volition may predominate.

In considering religious feeling we may well remember that human values have their seat for us in the sensibility. We shall try to show in our next section that the final goal of preaching is to produce action, or at least attitudes by wills. This is not, however, for the sake of just getting things done; instead the object is

the spiritual and inner consequences following to him who acts and to him who is the acted upon. In one sense even the action toward which the preaching drives is not the end but the beginning. Preaching directs itself toward the will. The wise preacher strives to start men to thinking and to make them feel deeply in order that they may set their wills toward God. With the will thus set the value of the will's attitude is shown in the profounder thinking and the profounder feeling which then arise anew out of the religious obedience.

So we must not neglect to help men to feel. We must do all we can to arouse and guide feeling. If a preacher can take an audience of two hundred or two thousand people, coming to church on Sunday tired and jaded after the toil of the week, and merely send them away "feeling better" after the sermon, that is worth while. This, by the way, is the secret of the power of some preachers whom their contemporaries occasionally look down upon as not especially intellectual. The hearers may not remember long what such a preacher says. They do not know what it is about him that helps, but something helps. The help is the glow and contagion of a live humanity. There is warmth, even fire in the better sense. As

long as daily existence rushes at such break-neck speed as now we may be grateful for such life-bringers. We who try to preach should strive always to keep ourselves even in such physical condition that everything about us suggests quickening and enkindling vitality.

Here we may as well speak of a certain æsthetic possibility even in the shaping of the sermon itself. Not many men who sit in the pews are able to judge a sermon from the point of view of the finer shades of skill in workmanship, but almost all realize the difference between a sermon which shows traits of an artist's craftsmanship and one which reveals bungling. Sermonic beauty has little to do with ornament—with quotations of poetry or allusions to flowers. Beauty may be inherent in the structure of the sermon itself—in its proportions, in the directness of its phrasing, and in the dignity of all its material. As likely as not the stamp of beauty may add marvelously to the effectiveness of the sermon as an instrument. Every generation has to mold over a deal of raw thought stuff which has been with men from the beginning. Each generation must shape this thought into terms of expression of its own. Since the instinctive craving of men is for excellence in that something we call "style," and since this craving shows itself

in all realms of creative effort, the minister may well seek to meet this demand in his preaching. There is a professionalism which is ruinous to the preaching of the gospel. There is a nobler professionalism which sets the gospel on high. The people are drawn by this highly skilled mastery of preaching whether they can describe just what it is or not.

As with the sense of beauty so also with the sense of humor. This too has its place in preaching. We are speaking of the guidance or control of feeling to religious ends. Control does not necessarily mean repression. When we tell a child to control his feelings we too often mean that he shall not laugh or cry. Control ought to mean use for the highest purposes. We do not have in mind the joke-teller when we say that preaching should show a sense of humor. For much opposition to Christianity vanishes in an atmosphere charged with an appreciation of the humorous. Ridicule has often been deadly as a foe of some forms of Christianity, but ridicule can be even more deadly when turned against the enemies of Christianity. There is indeed a heart-broken skepticism among men which comes out of sheer disappointment, of thwarted plans, of shattered dreams. Such skepticism is entitled to respect because of the human agony out of

which it springs. There is another skepticism, that of intellectual arrogance and spiritual conceit. This is entitled to no more respect now than when the old prophet let the fierceness of his wit play around the idea of a Baal who perchance was asleep and had to be awakened. Elijah's fire of sarcasm on the heads of the priests of Baal was almost as convincing as the fire which afterward fell on the sacrifice. So too with the scorn of Isaiah over the idol-makers who used the left-over idol stuff for fuel.

There is another and deeper meaning in humor. It is akin to the satisfaction we feel when we see a hard problem solved, or something out of place put into place. The smile on the faces of men as they behold a problem fall into orderly solution is not only the joy of relief. It is the satisfaction which arises as the feeling for the fitness of things is gratified. One of the most encouraging of scriptural promises is that those who mourn shall one day laugh. If mourning comes partly as the sense of strain when things are wrong, laughter should follow when all things fall into their proper place.

There may be decided resentment at the suggestion that one element in popular preaching should be the right use of pathos. Pathos in

the pulpit has been fearfully abused and that too because of the popular demand for pathos. Some of the contempt which many good people feel toward popular appeal as ordinarily understood is directed at the emphasis which preachers have so often laid on tears as the surest sign that speech is effective with an audience. Surely, there is a diviner pathos than that which the moving picture or the cheap novel strives after. There must be a higher pulpit pathos than what the youngsters to-day call "sob-stuff," if we are not to abandon the pathetic altogether.

The fundamental element in the popular response to pathos is not a wanton propensity on the part of hearers toward the maudlin. If the response to the pathetic is not thoroughly bridled, it does indeed soon become maudlin; but bridles are instruments for guidance and not for repression. Underneath our response to the pathetic is the recognition of the universal fact of tragedy in life. A hearer who Sunday after Sunday listens to sermons which betray no trace of recognition of the shadow which always hangs over human life begins to wonder if he is hearing true preaching. A presentation of human life in which the sunshine always predominates is simply not sound. We need not be tearful nor gloomy,

but we recognize life as it is when we let the shadows touch the presentation of the truth. Life is neither the glare of the mid-day nor the blackness of midnight. It is a half-light, or a landscape over which the clouds float. All the masters of pathos have known the control of light and shade, which, as in all art, plays so large a part in effectiveness. To ignore the shadow altogether brings, as we have said, a hint of falsity. To speak too bluntly of sorrow and tragedy is cruelty, but there is a course in between which cannot be prescribed or described, which touches firmly and yet lightly, and more by suggestion than by direct statement. Happy the preacher who in just a word can call up a forgotten boyhood, or people the memory again with faces that have faded from sight, or recall to us the dreams of youth, or so throw light upon a grief or a defeat that we feel soothed and gratified rather than harassed or distracted. Happier still if the master in the pulpit knows how so to clothe all experience with majesty or sublimity that the feeling of pathos is transfused into the feeling of awe and wonder.

People will respond to this loftier emotionalism. They may not know exactly the difference between the true and the false note struck upon the feelings, but they are aware of the

difference, and in the long run yield to the true note. Among the most widely read passages of Scripture are those that touch upon the pathetic. The story of Joseph, the cry of David over Absalom, the mourning of the worshipers by the streams of Babylon, to say nothing of the inexpressible sadness of the more sacred scenes in the life of our Lord, are among the passages to which Bible readers by the scores of thousands turn first.

We are not to attempt a catalogue of the feelings of the human heart. May we speak, however, about the enthusiasm for the Christ-like God? We do not wish to make conscience an emotion, or put moral feelings on the same plane as the æsthetic, though all are indeed manifestations of spiritual life. If, by the way, we think it worth while to coin such terms as "omnipotence," "omnipresence," and "omniscience" as describing a God deserving worship, we might just as well coin one more term and speak of God's "omnisensibility," by which we would mean God's power to gather up within himself all worthy phases of feeling, especially the feeling revealed in Christ. I spoke in one of my opening pages about making men believe the good news about God. If we can believe that in Christ we have the heart of God laid bare; if it is true that the Christ-

spirit and feeling rules at the center of the universe; if, without regard to theological speculation about the Logos, Christ expresses the meaning for which all things were made; if we can believe all this and make men believe it, we have touched the springs of an unconquerable enthusiasm, which does not, indeed, give itself to tumult or to shouting, but which moves forward nevertheless to the conquest of the world.

It is the business of the preacher to create reserves of enthusiasm that do not run off in flood and escape. To this end there should be something about preaching which solidifies the enthusiasm for the nobler values and stores it in the realm of permanent motive or impulse. A great worker for his fellow men was once asked if with so many drains on his compassion he did not at times fear that his pity would dry up. His reply was that pity as a conscious state of feeling might indeed come and go, but that pity as a motive remained. Likewise rightly to control the emotions of the people who hear us preach is not to encourage that expression with which the emotions vanish, but to sink them down to that realm where they abide among the lasting motives of our lives.

VII

THE QUICKENING OF THE WILL

We have said that we have planned to arrange these chapters in an ascending scale. We come to the most important of all in this aspect of our consideration of preaching—preaching as a help to make men act.

The will must stand at the center of any system of religion which is to be fair to all men, to people as we find them, for the will is the one force over which each of us has a measure of control. If the kingdom of God had at its entrance welcome only to thinkers, it would shut out multitudes. If it welcomed only those capable of rapt states of emotional experiences, it would shut out other multitudes. When, however, the requirement is that men do the will of God, that test is one which every man can reach—a test which is within the grasp of the child and of the sage, of the barbarian and of the philosopher, of the bond and of the free. The will of God cannot mean the same for all alike, or for any two alike, but so far as it can be understood by each it can be obeyed by each. This makes the kingdom of God a kingdom of us all.

What do we mean by doing the will of God? We mean simply doing whatever appeals to our thought and conscience as the will of God. If we are to erect artificial tests, of course we may find ourselves in confusion, but we have in mind something more fundamental. By doing the will of God we mean in the last analysis the resolution to live in the spirit of the Christ-like God. Many of us have become perplexed at some expositions of the doctrine of the "witness of the Spirit" so called. Rightly interpreted the doctrine can only mean the witness of assurance, the firmness of conviction of the presence of God which is the heart of Christian privilege. The doctrine has indeed often been expounded as a mystic, almost magic testimony in an altogether extraordinary inner feeling. To one perplexed it may be well to remember that there is a witness a good man can always have, namely, the witness of his own spirit. He can know what he intends to do. He can know what side he chooses. He can know what world of values he votes for. To bring men to deliberate purposefulness like this is a major part of Christian preaching.

We repeat that it is the duty of preaching to help. Just as the kingdom of heaven is fair in that it puts forth a test for admission within the reach of every man, so it is fair also in that

it seeks for the free—not the compelled—assent of a man's will. No preaching is justified that finally overrides the wills of men. Suppose a preacher to have a strong overwhelming personality which in an irresistible rush carries men along with it toward righteousness. Righteousness is indeed good on its own account, but such compelling preaching would not be altogether Christian. Christianity never encourages reliance upon another to act for us. It rests down upon profounder respect for human choices than we often realize. Jesus said: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Jesus would not have been loyal to any trait of his own gospel to have forced an entrance. The only Christian compulsion is a compulsory attraction which persuades. So that Christian preaching is to be conceived as helpful, setting before minds noble courses, and aiding men to feel the pull of a new affection.

In helping men to side with God and to do his will the preacher can clear the ground of some misconceptions, one of them that doing the will of God involves necessarily a new and different round of deeds so far as the deeds themselves are concerned. If the problem is that of a life abandoning a career of selfishness and transgression, a different course of con-

duct—even involving violent change from the past—is admittedly necessary. Moreover, as I shall try to show later, society in its moral progress discerns that some activities are evil which were once esteemed good, and again the Christian must break with the past. For many, many people, however, doing the will of God would not necessitate action different from previous conduct. The conduct as conduct has been worthy. The difference would be in the new deliberate purpose of the will in the doing. If the purpose has been selfish, it must be made unselfish. If it has been indifferent, it must be charged with purpose. If the work as such is worth doing at all, it is worth doing with all the might of a Christian will. We say this, commonplace as it is, because so many of us judge the success of Christian preaching by the degree to which preachers arouse men to bustling activity specifically religious. Every churchman seems to wish his church to be a hive, which is well enough if the honey produced is worth eating. Possibly churches are not doing enough in specifically church tasks. Undoubtedly, more men should respond to specific Christian calls; but when all is said the immense workaday tasks of the world have to be carried forward and these are for the majority the chief sphere of Christian service.

One of the self-evident claims to credit which the human race has established for itself is the faithfulness with which men go through the vast mass of daily drudgery. Here is where most of us live. Here doing the will of God means living in the spirit of Christ—cheering our fellow-men, protesting against injustice, striving to make the scene of daily work one of the mansions of the Father's house. Popular preaching must keep in mind the daily existence of the majority. The preacher is not ministering just to get hold of the exceptional youth for some special service. If he neglects the exceptional youth and the possibilities of special service he will indeed fall short of his full duty. The main obligation, however, is with the ordinary man, to help him see that God is a Companion and Friend and to help him walk in that friendship. Doing the will of God is for that man just doing the next thing and the next in the spirit of Christ. The path is so clear that the wayfaring man need not make mistake, once he is in the path.

Yet the simplicity itself may be deceptive. Men may lose sight of the central importance of the attitude of will and take to following the strange gods of purely intellectual speculation or emotional thrill. We must insist that this citadel of the will is the target of all the preach-

er's effort. The preacher must make his hearers see that after enough of enlightenment of mind to enable them to discern the Christian path, and after enough of stir of feeling to prompt to action, the purposeful resolution is thereafter the key to all progress. We have talked in these addresses as if the mind first acted, then the feelings responded, and then the will finally took its stand. That has been somewhat due to the exigencies of systematic arrangement and also to the fact that some light of knowledge and some glow of feeling are involved in any action. Ultimately the high knowledge and the high feeling in the kingdom of God are built upon the doing of the will of God.

Have we not often thought of the significance of the parable of the two housebuilders, placed as that parable is at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount? The difference between the two houses was that one had a foundation and the other had not. One builder had digged deep. By digging Jesus means what he calls "doing the word," and the meaning clearly is that the plainest and simplest devotion of the will is the foundation on which a Christian superstructure—whatever it may be—is to stand. Digging for the foundation is the most ordinary labor, hard labor. It is the

labor that we would think anybody could do, given the requisite physical strength. We mean that it is not the labor held in especial regard for skill or for proficiency. It is the work within reach of the humblest toiler. Yet the implication of Jesus is that it is this work which is under the building of the house of Christian wisdom. The speech or the thought or the feeling may be finely enough conceived and phrased, but if it does not build upon the simplest doing of the will of God it will not stand in the day of storm.

The same implication runs through the figures of speech which Jesus used. "Bear much fruit. . . . So shall ye be my disciples." The life energies working at that intense effectiveness which bears fruit involve the full-orbed activity. Again, he said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me: so shall ye be my disciples." The figure of speech suggests once more the plainest, simplest service. Out of this yoke-bearing would come that understanding which would mark discipleship. Another expression, at least by implication, teaches the same truth. Jesus told his disciples that when men would revile them and persecute them and say all manner of evil against them falsely for his sake, they were to regard themselves as blessed, for so had men persecuted the prophets before

them. Only action can call forth the furious opposition which shows itself in revilings and persecutions. When the disciples came to the action which was positive enough to provoke persecution they arrived at new and sympathetic understanding of the prophets. Above all, the surest path to understanding is in cross-bearing—not sentimentalizing about the cross, or theorizing about it, but bearing the cross.

This does not mean that through doing the will of God the Christian will assuredly find himself the possessor of a scheme of theology or the recipient of trancelike visions. Obedience, however, does supply the data out of which theologies and insights are born. Better than a formal argument about God is the firm conviction—based upon years of attempt to do God's will—that God is. Better than any ecstatic experience is the alert insight into spiritual values which grows out of years of faithful obedience. When Amos came to Israel to denounce wrongdoing he exclaimed, apparently with some scorn, that he was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. He was no doubt attacking prophets for professionalism. He was calling the people away from the professionally and artificially contrived message and manufactured trance to simple obedience

to those commandments of God which any right-minded man ought to recognize as divine. We do not disparage worthy professionalism—by which we mean skill in helping people to do the will of God—but no thought of God is of value unless it comes out of godly life, and no feeling about God is wholesome or sound which does not spring out of the attempt of the human will to fit into the divine will.

Professor Francis G. Peabody once made an illuminating comment on the passage, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." He declared that whether intentionally or otherwise the order of the Fourth Gospel's terms about Jesus is significant. Jesus is the Way. Walking in the Way leads to the Truth. Out of the Truth comes that fullness of feeling which we mean by Life. So when the preacher has touched the wills of men he has made possible the opening of the mind and the flowering out of that feeling which is assurance and joy.

2. THE PREACHER AS THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

VIII

PASTORAL WORK AND PREACHING

We have examined, all too hurriedly, some considerations which the preacher should keep in mind if he would make his preaching popular. We come now to speak of the preacher as uttering truths that have not merely been revealed to him as an individual, but which have been focused in his consciousness through his dealing with the people. There is a sense in which preaching can be said to be by the people. The preacher is to be the voice of the people. We do not accept without qualification the doctrine that the voice of the people is the voice of God, but we are searching for whatever approach to the truth there may be in that old adage.

Before coming to the center of this theme, however, let us linger for a little over the self-evident proposition that if the preacher is to be the voice of the people he must know the people. Hence he must give himself to all available studies which will enable him to know the spirit of men. In his reading, except as he reads for recreation, he must keep

closest to the books which deal with men. Many of us read chiefly for the sake of finding illustrations, but much more important than any illustration is the knowledge of human life in its fundamental aspects. We may well be grateful that during the past quarter century so much has been done by scientific study to make clear to us more and more of the workings of the human mind and soul. The masses of people have been broken up into groups for careful observation: there are the children and the young and the mature and the old. We see that the spiritual characteristics of these groups are not just entertainingly charming incidents of personal experience, but revelations of human nature in its best possibilities. How a preacher can neglect the examinations of conversion in adolescence and such researches as those of William James in *Varieties of Religious Experience* is a puzzle. No matter who writes about the soul and its activities, the business of the preacher is to find out, if he can, all that has been said that points toward wisdom in dealing with souls. We have come clearly to see in our day that what we call the laws of mind are revelations of God's methods of doing just as truly as are the laws of nature. Every soul, indeed, comes into life with the marks of a distinct

difference, but so do every flower and every bird and every beast. As like as two peas in a pod, we say, but peas in a pod are not altogether alike. Unlikenesses do not prevent the operations of laws which must be the laws of God. If the study of individuals is important, are not also important all those studies which look toward the discovery of the laws according to which men act, or can act, when they move in groups? It will not do to assume a spiritually superior attitude toward such questions and sneer at formulas and statistical tables. Do the formulas and tables contain any hints of value? The scientific method is just the application of a common-sense method over a wider field than one observer can actually examine with his own eyes. If there is nothing far-fetched or religiously impertinent in asking why seven out of ten conversions in a preacher's own church have occurred during the ages of adolescence, what impertinence is there in asking why ten thousand conversions in a hundred churches have occurred during the same period? Or take that other field of psychology which has been relatively neglected—except as an occasional novelist has dealt with it, perhaps sensationally—the period of middle age in men. Why is it that so many men who have lived apparently

good lives up to forty-five years of age suddenly go wrong? Is it because at that time there is likely to be a disillusionment? Is it in middle age that some men see that there is no chance of the dreams of youth coming true? Is it then that men realize that the success they had hoped for is not likely ever to come? Does the first chill at the thought of old age come then? Is there then to any degree a physical basis for change in character? If we may legitimately ask this question about five men, what is wrong in asking it about men in general, even if we have to rely upon statistical tables and charts and other scientific apparatus to get an answer?

We say that the mark of the man of God is an awareness of God, an intuitive discernment of God's will. The preacher must be a man of God, but he must be a man of men also, knowing in himself how men will feel and how they will act in certain crises. Now, there are some men who seem to be endowed with the awareness of God in such manner that they can be said to belong to a type of religious genius. They have by nature a gift for awareness of the Divine. The man who is the safest guide, however, is the man who has attained to his religious knowledge by constant doing of the will of God, seeking by doing God's will to

come into communion with God. So also there are men who seem to have an almost uncanny knack of understanding their fellows. Without going beyond the four walls of their own houses they seem to know what men think and what men will do. Still even such men are likely to err if they do not mingle with men. After having paid our compliments to scientific knowledge of human nature which comes to us in the books we must still say that all this must be supplemented by the most faithful pastoral work among the people themselves.

It would seem that we ought to do this, if for no other reason, for the sake of getting a hold on people themselves, adding whatever element of personal power we may to the truth which we are preaching. We all have so much to say in the abstract about the workings of forces which move toward or away from the kingdom of heaven that we forget how much these forces take on a personal form. It would not seem scientific in this day of abstract impersonal statement to ask anybody to write a thesis on the part played even in the mightiest historical and social movements by personal influences. We are under the spell of those who talk of the outworking of social laws, predominantly economic. If, nevertheless, we could get at what moves people at the time of

crisis, we might have to lay emphasis on personal influences at which the abstract thinker would scoff. However it may be in the larger fields, it is certain in the realm of the preacher that personal interest in men is the surest road to predispose them to friendly consideration of the truth which the preacher is set to proclaim. How many times the preacher of no noteworthy intellectual ability gets a better hearing than his more lavishly endowed contemporary just because he takes more personal interest in his people than does his gifted brother! Especially if the preacher is trying to lead the thinking of his people into new paths does he need their confidence in himself, a confidence begotten by their knowing him.

Though this is a little aside from our main point, we must have a further word with those who disparage pastoral work. Understand, now, we are thinking from the point of view of discerning what people are holding in mind about religious matters. How can a man read that thought of the people which must now and again be put into expression for the sake of religious advance if he does not move among people? We are not trying to honor the hail-fellow-well-met who thinks he understands men because he knows the name of everybody

in town, or the brother who keeps count of all the doorbells he has rung, or the other brother who is always "dropping in to pass the time of day." We mean instead to put in his proper place the devoted servant of the Kingdom who in his desire to help men is willing to do an amount of pastoral calling that yields no immediate return, for the sake of seeing into the mind that is seriously perplexed about religious concerns, or of hearing one sentence from a mind which has fought a temptation or a doubt through to victory. Moreover, conversations which may not singly mean much taken together may reveal a mood or temper of the people. If a leading university considers it worth while to send relays of students into forests to watch every hour of the period of incubation of birds, how much more important to give theological students to realize that the human heart is understood only by careful observation!

If anyone cries out that this is making cases and specimens of people, that the object of pastoral work is just to help a man on his own account and for his own sake, we agree that this is indeed the main consideration; but he would be a strange Christian who would object to having his own experience utilized at least indirectly for the phrasing of a statement cal-

culated to help multitudes of others. The pastoral work must inevitably bear upon the preaching. No one fit to be in the ministry will violate confidences; but does a physician violate confidence when he uses the knowledge gained in a single case for statements of law or principle that may save the lives of hundreds or of thousands?

To be sure, this may damage the ordinary conception of pastoral work. It may reverse that conception. Instead of making the pastoral work consist in talk by the preacher it encourages free and spontaneous utterance by the one on whom the pastor is calling. No more helpful word was ever spoken to me in my work as a young minister than that of an older minister who told me that a good pastor did not need to be a conversationalist provided he could be an attentive and interested listener. The brilliant talkers are often among the least informed. If a pastor shows himself willing to listen, and can listen without fidgeting in a hurry to get to the next call on his list, he will be astonished to see how thoroughly people will open to him the depths of their lives, and how often they will give him a message which is a genuine voice of humanity.

A successful pastor once told me of the following experience: A member of his church

suddenly met a terrible grief. For days the stricken man sat almost in silence, but when my friend called on him he was moved to talk by the rare sympathy of a skilled physician of souls, for my friend possessed such rare sympathy. The mourner talked for one hour, for two, for three, and found his way toward the light as he himself talked. For the rest of his life he held in grateful honor the memory of the pastor who listened while he talked. Now what the mourner gained as he thus thought aloud toward the light was not less than the pastor learned. The pastor heard not just the man talking; he heard the voice of stricken humanity and a note from that voice sounded thereafter from his pulpit.

One reason for encouraging people "to talk themselves clear out" is that in the experiences which are most peculiarly our own we may find ourselves to be most like other people. Who of us has not had thoughts and feelings which have seemed so peculiarly his own that he has been afraid to mention them to others for fear of being misunderstood and perhaps laughed at? Yet who of us has not had the experience of discovering that such thoughts or feelings when actually expressed have been those that other people have seemed to understand best? Many of these most intimate ex-

periences are most catholic in their sweep. The man who knows these peculiarly personal experiences is able to preach in the widely human terms. Moreover, apart from all such intimacies, the preacher who, with a consecrated desire to serve, mingles most closely with his fellows is the one who can most genuinely utter the voice which we call the voice of humanity.

IX

THE CONGREGATION AS A FORCE

ALL that we have said thus far could be applied to persons taking them one at a time. So far we have been concerned chiefly with those puttings of the truth which would likely be popular with what we call the ordinary man, or the man on the street. We have been interested in the type of preaching which would make people wish to hear it as soon as they heard about it. Now we wish to speak for a chapter or two about the duty of the preacher to mold his group of hearers—so far as he can—into a unity, a force working with him for the exaltation of Christianity's human and divine ideals.

We are met at the outset with the old, old objection that seems so profound, namely, that a congregation is nothing apart from the people that compose it. Let the congregation depart one at a time, and after the last man passes the door there is no congregation left. In so far as this is a protest against mistaking merely nominal unities for realities we may let it stand; but what we are thinking of is

clear on a little reflection: that men in groups are different from men as separate persons. Men in groups think differently, they feel differently, they act differently than when separate. If it is true that two material particles develop different powers when acting together from those which they reveal when acting separately, why should it be strange that persons reveal new powers when acting together? Now all we are asking is that the preacher keep in mind the spiritual force of the congregation as a unity and try to control it for religious purposes.

We are witnessing to-day the development of popular power along a path different from that our fathers expected to see. The older thought of popular force was that of a huge mass of human beings whose total strength might one day be available for forward movements in every direction. In certain respects we still hold to that ideal, an ideal which we have before us in our conception of the public opinion of a whole nation, for example; but within the mass of the people we discern various minor groups—minor as to size and number—which we must think of as unities and entities. Society as a whole remains one mass for some purposes, but for others becomes an organism of interrelated groups. This has,

of course, always been so. There have been in all lands these voluntary and compulsory groups, but it is only comparatively recently that the significance of the groups has been taken seriously enough by social students.

In our thought it is the business of the ministry to take heed to the significance of church groups and make them count for the utmost. The master preachers have always put their stamp on their congregations. What we are urging, however, is the deliberate recognition of this possibility and of the possibility of utilizing the inherent power of a congregation, just by the fact that it is a congregation, to reenforce the strength of the separate members and to reenforce also the power of the preacher in lifting the gospel on high.

Suppose we look first at the power of the congregation over its own members. It is quite the fashion to criticize any group influence on a member of the group, especially any religious influence, as "crowd contagion." Let us start, then, from crowd contagion. There can be no doubt of the possibility of such contagion, and of its perils. Respectable members of a community can be so seized by crowd contagion as to join in lynching riots which they never would have sanctioned for a second if they had been alone. I remember

once seeing a religious assembly—in fact, an assembly of preachers, all of them cultivated and trained—swept into a fury of applause, approving the rebuke directed against a presiding officer whom they all knew to be in the right. A sharp word of censure from the floor started the applause, which grew by its own intensity till the group was almost frenzied. The storm blew itself out in a few minutes and then every man was ashamed of himself. A psychologist has shown us that the communities in the South which frequently resort to horrible lynching parties are the same communities which experience striking and spectacular religious revivals. Only, it should always be remembered that the revivals are of the extravagant emotional variety.

We fully admit the peril of congregational force. But is not the greatness of the peril a measure of the possibility of the good which can come from the same force wisely controlled and directed? The same writer who points out that lynching and revival meetings occur with the same group raises the question as to whether John Wesley did not have almost a hypnotic ability to arouse intense emotion in his audiences. Would it not be a fairer assumption that the emotionalism of early Methodism was the contagious stimulus of the

crowd itself, assembled together with high emotional expectancy, and that Wesley's power was that of controlling the crowd force for lofty religious purposes? At any rate the power was generated. Wesley seems to have had his success in canalizing the force and setting it to work. Those of us who remember the Moody meetings know that the size of the audience itself, and the expectancy of the audience, contributed mightily to the irresistibility of the evangelistic appeal. We do not recall that any lynching parties followed Moody's meetings or Wesley's.

The reference to evangelistic gatherings, however, does bring us close to the danger of crowd contagion. Before discussing the congregational power as a force for good we are anxious to be entirely fair in pointing out the dangers. If a man who is living a selfish and evil life is searching help to make a new start, and the mass meeting by its loosing the contagion of the mass spirit helps him toward that start, well and good. Are all contagions bad? Are we not to judge contagion by what one catches? Probably there is no actual microbe that makes for good health as the pneumonia microbe makes for disease, but good health is contagious at least in that we can catch from the healthy man something of the

buoyancy of spirit in good health, which itself tends to beget good health. We admit that the danger is that in the evangelistic mass meeting a man's will may be overborne and the man swept to a decision which is not a decision. The crowd has carried him along; when the crowd falls away he cannot stand alone. Or the man may rely so much on the inspiration of the huge meeting that when that disperses his will relaxes. Then the last state is worse than the first.

Having heeded the dangers, we may now recognize the advantages—the power of the congregation for good. Look at its power to quicken sluggish minds. Wise pedagogy is to-day insisting on the power of the class of pupils itself as an aid in education. When I went to school almost the only function the class itself served was to supply punishment by humiliation in case of public failure. The presence of an audience who could be depended on to laugh at a too ridiculous blunder was in a measure an intellectual stimulus. Teachers to-day, however, feel that there is a higher function for the class as a class than this, that the part of the class is not fully played when each pupil as a separate individual has recited in the presence of the other individuals, each of them thinking of his own separate perform-

ance. So there are being sought ways to make the spirit of the class itself a quickener of all the minds of the class, ways of enkindling alertness and intellectual expectancy in problems considered by the class as a class, sitting together as a class.

However it may be with schools, it is evident that a congregation can be used to quicken the minds of the separate members. An alert audience is one of the best quickeners of mental force. The hearer prone to wandering thoughts finds his attention compelled by the very fact that five hundred others are listening. If a man who can see nothing in the nobler forms of music wishes to cultivate a taste for such music, he would best attend concerts where such music is rendered. To sit with hundreds of other people who are listening will of itself do something to sharpen a dull understanding. Likewise statements which seem tame enough if we read them in cold print glow with life when we hear them as they are delivered to the congregation. We often remark of such statements that what is missing as we see them in print is the personality of the preacher. This may be true, but hardly so true as that the contagion of the audience is also left out. It is simply impossible for a half a thousand or more people to listen intently

at the same instant without pulling the slower minds to a speed which they could not attain by their individual selves. In an earlier chapter I said that the preacher should aim at the average normal intelligence in his audience. This needs to be supplemented by the reflection that the audience of listeners has power by its sheer listening to lift the average mind to an ability beyond the average. Unfortunately, when all this works the other way and the audience is listless or bored every mind present is depressed almost to a subnormal state.

At the risk of overillustrating may we say that these congregational effects are even more notable when a subject involving some play of feeling is involved. Why is it that we smile or laugh aloud at utterances before an audience that do not seem particularly humorous when we read them at home? Because the audience turned upon us its cooperating sense of humor. More striking still, why is it that we weep in the audience at passages that would not beget a sigh at home? Because we are in an audience.

What has all this to do with the preacher? Much every way. It is the duty of the preacher to recognize such group forces and to control them, not to repress them on the one hand or to allow them to break in emotional storms or

freshets on the other. Equally urgent is the necessity of the preacher's recognizing the power of the audience over himself and of keeping himself sensitive to the audience. We have known speakers who have said that the audience makes no difference to them, that they speak for the unfolding of their own thoughts without regard to the audience. Such men can never be popular preachers. If there is any virtue at all in Paul's figure of the body of Christ, the various parts of the church act and react on one another. The preacher is an organ of the Body of Christ, and an organ is not a self-sufficient unity. An organ is part of an organism. He is indeed a poor preacher if he does not feel the power of his congregation quite as truly as the congregation feels his power, if his thought does not take on new shades of meaning even to himself as hundreds of people listen to him, or if he is not stirred to better thought and expression by the presence of the audience in front of him.

When we say that the preacher is to keep himself sensitive to his audience we do not mean that he shall yield to the audience in any unworthy way, all of which we shall try to emphasize later; but we do mean that he shall keep the congregation always before his thought. He is to serve them by expressing to

them what is noblest in themselves, by declaring to the world that Christian consciousness a part of which at least is shaped by his own group. He is not to allow any deadening influence to steal into his life, to allow the channels for the influx of spiritual life from his people to himself to become blocked, or the mystic currents thwarted. Possibly one reason why speakers who suffer from stage fright at first finally succeed so well is that they are unusually sensitive to the audience. When this sensitiveness is properly controlled it tends to make the preacher a genuine voice of the people.

X

THE MESSAGE OF THE CONGREGATION

As we have said, the preacher must be on guard against the wrong kind of sensitiveness toward the congregation. This is the sensitiveness which is merely anxious to please, or the sensitiveness which asks what the people think without inquiring as to whether that thought is their best thought. To step for a moment into another sphere, we may reasonably say that the difference between a politician and a statesman is that the politician asks only what the people do as a matter of fact think. What they think may be good or bad. The politician does not trouble himself except at the one point—what do the people think? Having learned that, he gives it voice. The old story of the politician who discovered while making a speech that he was not at all pleasing the crowd is in place. "Gentlemen," he remarked, "I thought these were your views. If they are not, I shall be pleased to advocate the contrary." The demagogue is the man who catches the people's thought and voices it no matter what it may be.

The statesman, on the other hand, seeks to

give voice not just to the thought of the moment, but to the sentiment of the people at its best and highest reach. He looks always for the signs of these higher currents and seeks by expression to make them more effective to the mind of the people themselves. This is no easy task. There is in the realm of historic study a conflict between those who maintain something of the old "great-man" theory—the theory that historical advances come from outstanding leaders who see what ought to be done and bring it to pass—and those who hold another theory which claims that leaders are of small consequence, that the people themselves make world-wide demands and that discoveries and inventions and philosophies and religions come in response to those demands. The expositors of this theory claim, for example, that America would have soon been discovered if Columbus had never sailed, that the significance of Columbus was accidental, that there was a demand for a new route to the east and some one would have soon found it. The theory claims also that Luther was a relatively insignificant factor in the Reformation. Forces were at work which would have brought the Reformation if Luther had never lived, or even if he had opposed the Reformation.

Each of these theories has its element of soundness. Great movements do not come until there is a demand for them. Great theories get no chance until they fall in with the temper of a time. But it requires a great mind to recognize the demand and to phrase it and meet it. For the demand of which so much is said is at first not articulate. The time may yearn after something and not know what it is, or only half know. The people can speak best two words—yes and no. They can accept or reject. What the people are conscious of is a restless impulse, and they know what it is they want after it is put before them. Now, to catch this impulse in its loftiest phrases and to interpret it to the age itself requires genius. A man may be just a voice of his time, but, after all, there are differences in voices. Some are true and some are false. Some are accurate and some are careless, some attractive and some repulsive, some stiff and some flexible. The leader may indeed be only the voice of his time, but the voice may indicate genius in itself. The voice of autocratic command is indeed gone. We do not believe in the great-man theory that some benevolent intellectual despot is to tell the people what is good for them, but when the voice of revelation of the deeper feeling of the people themselves speaks,

and speaks in terms persuasive, the people follow, their own thought as thus uttered being a guiding call. This requires of him who is to be the voice the profoundest reflection, the deepest submersion of himself in the life of his time, the utmost loyalty to ideals, the most thorough training in the power of expression —attributes which we have tried to insist upon in these addresses thus far.

Let us look at this more specifically from the point of view of the minister. He preaches a sermon which seems to him to present truth in an altogether new light. The people are interested. They say after the sermon: "That was fine! I never thought of that before." Let not the preacher feel too much complimented. It may be that this new thought is one of which the people ought to think. It may be that the preacher should strive to sink the new conception deeply into the consciousness of his congregation. It may also be that the new thought is bright and sparkling, with no traces of lasting significance whatever. If the people say, "That is something that I have thought of, or half-thought of; that is something I have wished someone to say," the chances are that the preacher is on the path toward a message which will be a message of the congregation itself. The old definition of

oratory expressed so often by Gladstone is pertinent—that the orator gives to the people in showers what he takes from the people in mist or spray. The suggestion is legitimate of a mountain standing over against the clouds of the sea and condensing into running streams what floats as cloud against the mountain peak. This holds of all forms of expression: even art must fall in with moods of the people which the people may not recognize till they behold the artistic expression.

As further illustration think of the minister in public prayer. When the minister stands before his audience to pray what is he expected to do? We reply, "To lead in prayer." What is "leading in prayer"? It is not praying just as one would pray in the silence of one's own room at home. I have no right to take my personal perplexities and grief to the Lord in public prayer, at least not in the language of merely personal petition. There would be something shocking in a preacher's carrying into petition in public prayer the anguish of his own soul over a purely personal struggle. No; leading in prayer means uttering the petition which the people would utter if they could. The people come in tired after the work of the week. They are refreshed if the preacher prays in such

terms that they can heartily say "Amen"; if they seem to hear themselves praying in speech they would use if they could, speech that is not theirs by their own utterance but theirs by immediate sanction as soon as they hear it. Paul said the last word on this and kindred themes when he gave advice to early Christians who indulged in public religious speech in an unknown tongue. When a man speaks in an unknown tongue he may edify himself, but how can he that sitteth in the seat of the unlearned say "Amen"? The masters in any field, we repeat, are those who have caught the spirit of their time, and have so uttered it that it becomes a genuine voice of humanity. The few greatest books in the world's treasury have seized and said once for all the things forever true of human life. According to James Russell Lowell, the abiding significance of Cervantes' *Don Quixote,* for example, is that it sets forth in imperishable prose that conflict between the ideal and the actual which is the perennial mark of man's struggle. It would not detract from the justice of this remark to discover that Cervantes himself was not deliberately dealing with any such problem. The chief significance of any man's work may be a quality of which he himself is not conscious.

A congregation itself then may utter through

the lips of a preacher a distinctive prophetic message. The preacher is to recognize this possibility and lift it to as high a level as may be. The initiative toward a larger message may indeed come from the mind of the congregation itself as the preacher learns that mind by intimate personal contact. The force in the message too may come from the congregation, but the preacher must strive to press into the wine of rare spiritual speech the best fruitage of the wisdom of his people.

The preacher must be watchful against the selective force of the people's listening. We used to have in the Methodist Episcopal Church a homiletic phenomenon which was known as the bishop's sermon. In the old days before the present area system was established the bishops of the church traveled over the whole denomination in their regular administration. They seldom preached before the same congregations or the same Conference of ministers more than three or four times in a quarter of a century. The result was that the sermons which they preached were not more than five or ten in number, but were, for the most part, of unusual power. The explanation of the certainty of the bishops' sermons to produce a remarkable effect came from the constantly excited selective power

of audiences. Very likely in all unconsciousness the bishop was affected by the fact that the people listened most intently to some parts and only indifferently to others. The attractive passages were then more used and elaborated and the unattractive passages modified or dropped out. On the whole, the selective process developed some poor preachers into good ones, but it was of benefit to the stronger preachers only at the point of delivery. Anxious to make the most of single opportunities, the speakers used the sermons which would be most impressive at the moment, and the creative, more prophetic elements tended to fall away.

The temptation does not confront the preacher ministering to a particular congregation in just this form, but the problem with the long-termed pastorate is often acute. It is easy for the preacher to see what appeals most to the attention of his people and to adapt himself to that demand. This must not be done in any subservient and acquiescent spirit. It is legitimate in so far as the congregation is moving toward a nobler and nobler Christian ideal. Some congregations mold ministers outright and make them better. Others make them worse. The two forces should act and react—the force from the pulpit and the force

from the pew—for the utterance of a message which embodies the deepest sentiment of the congregation in the best expression of the preacher, until preacher and people together become a veritable organism within that larger organism of the church which we call the Body of Christ.

If we do this, we give congregations each a distinctiveness which cannot be escaped. Do we not thus depart from our search for methods to make preaching popular? We started with an emphasis on the appeal to the plain man, the man of the street, in terms that he could understand. In all this stress on making a congregation distinctive are we not getting away from the main mass of the people?

If the mark of distinction is something artificial, or if it departs from the underlying human elements in religion, it is a sign of widening abyss between the church and the people. We regret to say that there have been churches with such distinctiveness—churches known as fashionable churches, or rich men's churches, or churches representing some minor phase of belief, or even some whim or aberration. Are such churches to be allowed to monopolize so good a term as "distinctive"? Cannot churches be distinguished by the force of their emphasis on the loftiest or broadest phases

of the gospel? Can they not be distinguished by their hospitality to all comers and by their desire to make the best they have the property of all who will receive? The truths of Christianity have as one of their marks the possibility of being shared with all who will take of them, without impoverishing but rather enriching the givers. If the best the church has is comfortable sittings whose expensiveness makes them a trapping of wealth and social distinction, such goods cannot well be shared beyond a limited circle. If, on the contrary, a church stands for the best in Christianity, that best can be shared. The more common the church makes the truth, the more distinctive the church becomes.

In our first section our thought was mainly with the preacher. In this section it has been largely with the congregation. We pass to look at some of the wider human tasks to which preacher and people should together devote themselves.

3. THE LARGER HUMAN VALUES

XI

A CHRISTIAN PUBLIC OPINION

One of the chief results of preacher and congregation working together for the coming of the kingdom of Heaven should be the Christianization of public opinion. We are to deal with some of the more definitely social aspects of the Kingdom from now on and in this realm public opinion is the important factor. If one were to make a crusade to-day against evil in industrial and social life he would have to call attention to the extent to which selfish forces seek to control the sources of public opinion. In the earlier days when popular government was in its infancy the attempt of those selfish interests was sometimes to buy votes outright, sometimes to buy legislators or judges outright. Such crude methods are not much used to-day except in crude communities. Instead we have the attempt to make or to fashion public opinion itself, to which legislators and judges will have to bow. So the work is done through press, or speech, or picture show.

It is not necessary to stop long to emphasize the force of public sentiment. We have just passed through a war period in which its might

has been shown for good and for ill. Those who will have it that a conflict like the World War is merely a struggle between economic forces forget that the immediate driving force is that of ideals, good or bad. Inasmuch as it is impossible to kill outright an entire nation the attempt is to break the spirit of that nation. The ideals may be low or high, but through them nations strike at one another. Even the man who says that economic forces are omnipotent in human affairs is always talking about his theory. If he were consistent he would sit still and let the economic forces drive. His talking itself assumes that these forces, blind as they are, can be recognized and controlled. We do not say that it is the truth that sways people. We say that it is what people think is the truth that sways them. Think of the terrible lengths that legislatures and executives and courts went in 1917-18 against those in the United States who were suspected of not being fully loyal. The methods by which citizens were deprived of liberties without adequate cause will remain a stain on our history for generations. It is not just, however, to blame law-makers, or police or judges for all of this disgrace. They did their own evil share, and did it with a vengeance, but the irresistible agent at work was public

opinion. If the war of 1917-18 was a mighty popular crusade for an ideal of popular sovereignty—and in the mind of the people it was certainly that—it was also a revelation of the awfulness of the public will in its disregard of what had hitherto been proclaimed as right. In any case there can be no doubt about the power of the public thought.

Forthwith we are met by the objection that all this is aside from the purpose of the church, that purpose being to get hold of individuals and convert them one at a time. What this legitimately means is that every man is to make a decision for himself. Nobody and no thing outside of himself can decide for him: but no power is stronger than public opinion in shaping the decisions which an individual makes. If a decision is once made no power is stronger than public opinion in helping to keep or break it. Of this more later, but it is interesting to hear men who want mass meetings to help in revival campaigns protest against our talking about public sentiment as an evangelistic force. The world simply cannot be evangelized until public opinion is captured.

The first Christian duty in reference to public opinion is that of—upon proper occasion—defying it and rebuking it. Public sentiment

is manifestly not now Christian, except to a very minor degree. That being the case the duty of the church, when the occasion is serious enough, is to challenge and rebuke public opinion. Happy that community which possesses churches which will stand behind their preachers when the preachers in prophetic spirit rebuke the controlling force of the hour! How thrilled we all are at the memory of the Old Testament prophets and their spiritual descendants of later days who in the name of human and divine ideals rebuked kings even at the peril of their own lives. But what was the heroism of rebuking a king compared to the heroism of rebuking the ruling force to-day —the sentiment of the people themselves! The reach of the king was seldom more than physical, but the outreach of the feeling of the masses is much more sure and much more deadly. For modern effectiveness the prophet must speak in the name of a congregation or larger group. One voice may be easily stilled, but the voice of a church has a volume which can seldom be ignored. We need not only the voice of the prophetic preacher, but that voice reenforced by the thought and resolution of the prophetic community. The preacher must indeed be a voice, but not a voice from the empty air. He must be the voice of a body.

The question has been raised in recent months—during and since the war—as to how far the prophetic church—preacher and people—should go in defiance of a state decree. A few years ago this question would hardly have been raised. Through centuries of living together the church and the state had come to have pretty distinct spheres. Practically there was not much friction. In these latter days, however, of attempt to compel churches to stand for all the economic and social orthodoxies, when zealous but ill-informed legislators have taken it on themselves to tell school teachers what they shall teach, the churches would do well to look closely to their own independence. The state may be the voice of all society considered as a whole, but it is not necessarily the voice of God. Nothing more dreadful could happen to society itself than for the church to condition its utterances upon what society and the state want said. The quickest way to make the church utterly useless is to make it the voice of a state not yet Christianized. When the state acts in a Christian spirit the church may well applaud, but never in such fashion as to lead the state to feel that it can *always count* on church support. We are not now advocating anarchy. We are not counseling law-breaking, but we

are standing for the church's right of prophetic utterance in criticism and rebuke. Shall the church allow this prophetic function to pass to secular agents? It will be remembered that the best criticism of the Dred Scott decision came from one outside the church—from Abraham Lincoln—a criticism framed in terms of respect to the court and yet directed at nothing short of reversal of the decree. The church is not to counsel law-breaking—though the early Christians were not conspicuously successful in keeping out of jail: but the church is not to withhold criticism from any institution or group or individual who blocks the road of the kingdom of Heaven. By the way, a certain boldness in dealing with public opinion is one of the most successful methods of dealing with it. Terrible as is this force, the church must learn not to be afraid of it when it starts on a wrong course. That it is so positive in its power is a reason for like positiveness in resisting it. This is not to preach any pose of positiveness, any theatric assumption of firmness, but a plea for the force that comes out of downright sincerity of conviction and motive and method. An adviser of speakers seeking to influence public opinion once said that the secret of power over public opinion is earnestness, that if earnest-

ness is not felt it should be assumed. Advice like this is abominable. Earnestness is indeed the path to success in facing public opinion: but if earnestness is not sincere the speaker should not speak. Here no tricks of method are permissible. We are proceeding on the assumption that we are dealing with moral issues. There is no use of trying to deal with moral issues immorally.

In addition to the control of public opinion by direct challenge there is the duty of securing publicity for causes which can be decided only by the people. We shall later speak of definite social problems, but let us here mention just one for the sake of illustration. We refer to the industrial struggle which in one stage or another is being experienced by every people at the present time. Who settles an industrial question? Public opinion. Both sides of the conflict battle to win public opinion. Now what is to hinder the church, in a particular crisis, from trying to learn what the facts are and to put them before the people? Grant that the church is not an expert in the detail of industrial processes, has not the church a right to ask questions about the human effect of those processes? A steel manufacturer recently gave it as his opinion that no one should say anything about steel who

did not know the processes of making steel, the question having to do with an industrial dispute with thousands of workers in the steel business. The pungent remark was supposed to deal quite summarily with the problem of the twelve-hour day, and deserved the retort that manufacturers should not make comments on social ethics unless they know something about social ethics. No: the church has a right to ask questions and to publish the answers to those questions. All sides have a right to be heard, and it is coming more and more to be an offense against the public itself when any institution refuses to answer questions involving human welfare. It will not do to try to meet this by saying that the church cannot understand technical processes and that she has no right to inquire into trade secrets. There never has been an investigation into industrial welfare that has found it necessary to deal in any considerable degree with either technical processes or trade secrets as such. Any plain man, however, is entitled to know whether the technical processes work against the right, or whether the trade secrets are harmful to men.

If the church undertakes propaganda for Christianity she must remember that she is dealing with the truth. She does not have the

privilege of an advocate to make out a one-sidedly strong case. Having discovered what appears to her as true, she is entitled to push that truth as far as is consistent with the truth itself. The preacher has no right to misrepresent or distort the positions even of the worst causes, but he is under bonds to do all he can to make the truth effective against wrong.

We need attack on evil by the preacher in the name of the truth. We need also the positive forcing of evil and good into the fullest publicity. This does not mean, however, that the prophet of the church is to think that he is doing his full duty as to public opinion just in attacking specific evil or urging specific good. It is the business of the preacher to set a standard and a tone toward the vital religious themes that affect the public which will prevent some questions from ever being raised, and which will prove hospitable to other questions. Or the preacher must do his part to make that social atmosphere or social climate in which evil dies out and good flourishes. We have gone far enough in making public sentiment human to know that some questions cannot even be raised to-day. Suppose a man should arise to preach the doctrine that all murders should be punishable according to the worth of the victim killed. He might make

quite a show of argument to prove that it is more of an offense to kill a good man than a bad man, more of an offense to kill a useful man than a worthless one, and so on and on. There are endless possibilities of debate here; but the social atmosphere to-day would not allow such questions to be raised. When it comes to murder one life is theoretically as much worthy of protection as another. Lawyers may find a way to introduce a practical inequality even here, but the open avowal of such a purpose would not get far.

The sentiment of a community is to be won for the kingdom of God. If we can create a sentiment friendly to good and deadly to evil we shall have supplied the prime requisite for the coming of the heavenly kingdom. As it is the moral climate is too cold, or too dry, or too blustery for the growth of the finer flowers of righteousness. It might show sincere consecration to work patiently year after year to grow roses in the open air of Greenland, but the effort could hardly deserve the highest praise after all. Some virtues in this world will not get much chance till the spiritual climate changes. We have done creditably in some elementary matters, as the murder illustration may suggest. We have not made a beginning in others. In some fields we have be-

gun to put the Sermon on the Mount into practice, but in others the first implications of that Sermon are not yet intelligible. "Love your enemies" is hardly a doctrine, for instance, that patriotic public sentiment would listen to, unless indeed the skilled exegete could make it clear that we are to show our love for the enemy by shooting him for his soul's good.

XII

UNFOLDING THE HUMAN IDEAL

It is incumbent on the Christian church, working through its prophets, in an atmosphere of increasingly Christian public opinion, to unfold the implications of the human ideal. The prophet of God may not always be able to tell men just how to act toward one another, but he should always set before them the highest human ideal that they may act in its light. There is an ideal of human life—in part directly stated and in part implied—in the Christian revelation. Or the ideal is like a bud whose beauty and fruitage have not yet unfolded. The preacher must create the atmosphere of public opinion which will warm the ideal into fullest expression. If the church has a rich conception of God that conception itself should carry increasing implications as to the worth of a man.

We may remark in passing that in the progress of the centuries the ideal of manhood has been expanding, and sometimes without much help from the church. Leaders of opinion outside of the church have done much to unfold

the meaning of an ideal human life. This ideal has in turn reacted on the conception of God. As men have found a better idea of man they have demanded a better idea of God. Not that they have been inventing a God. They have not been inventing except in the sense of finding. They have thought of the best ideals of what man should be as a trustworthy revelation of what God is. For example, take the extent to which the responsibilities attaching to the human use of power have grown. In the old days a king could do no wrong. He had a divine right to rule. Just as God could rule unchallenged over all men, so the king—a vicegerent of God on earth—could absolutely sway his group of subjects. The king was responsible to no one but God, and God himself was not responsible to any one. Both these notions are gone, or fast going. Men—often in the tones of wrath—have challenged God, or rather the doctrines of God in their time, in the name of human rights, and have forced into acceptance a better idea of God. Many an honest man would have sooner gone to perdition outright than to have yielded to the misconception of divine sovereignty preached a few hundred years ago. Looking back through the history of the church, we see that the idea of the God of tyranny and injustice has de-

served about all the serious attack it has received. Men have finally dared to believe the best about God, when once they could believe the best about themselves. They have no sooner realized a new moral obligation for man than they have dared put the same obligation upon God. So that the idea and the ideal of God have together been made more and more moral. It is no longer possible to preach a God who by his own arbitrary decree can make good an action which we would condemn as bad in men. We repeat that this process of moralizing the conception of God has been forced quite as much from outside the church as from inside.

This has to be said in all fairness. The necessity is now upon us, however, to turn the process around and make the ideal of God count more than before for the unfolding of the ideal of human life. If in the name of man we have corrected our ideal of God, in the name of God we must continuously elevate our ideal of manhood. We are coming more and more to the ideal of the Christ-like God. If God is like Christ then his attitude toward men is like Christ's attitude. If we are to be Christian then our attitude toward men is to be like Christ's. If we insist that men are to be treated well on their own account and not on

God's account, we reply that we will not quibble over terms. We are willing to say that God treats men as men for what they are on their own account. Only, we ask that the preacher and church work together to bring God to men as their Christlike Companion and Friend.

The wrongs in Christian thinking often have come out of failing to get our conceptions thoroughly moral and spiritual. Think how often the doctrine of human immortality has been used to hold men on earth in a hard lot. Slaves have been told that there is another life beyond this, that this life at best is but a hand's breadth and that the life beyond is eternal, that those who suffer here shall rejoice there, that the men in dire bondage would much better direct their thoughts to future bliss than to relief from present woes. Even in this twentieth century we have heard something of this doctrine. A famous military expert once told me that he wished the churches would lay more stress on immortality so that men would fear death less. Pious industrial magnates are often deeply moved at the failure of the preachers to preach such a gospel of the other life as will prevent industrial unrest in this existence. All of which is pretty much seen through to-day, the trouble being that when the application of the doctrine is cast

aside the belief in immortality itself is likely to be abandoned also. As a legitimate inference, however, it is hard to see how we can hold to the revelation of the Christlike God and not hold to human immortality. Let it be freely admitted that there is no scientific proof of immortality, and let it be granted also that the philosophical arguments for immortality are all too weak to stand the strain put upon them. As long as there is no scientific disproof of the belief and as long as the arguments against it are not conclusive, we are entitled to carry the implications of the doctrine of the Christlike God forward to the belief in the immortality of men, because of the emphasis of Christ on the worth of a man's life in itself. If we can once get preachers and churches and social sentiment to view men as Christ viewed them, and then to ask always, "Ought a man to be treated thus or thus?" we would speedily unfold the idea of man into practical consequences which would put us on the path to the elimination of many a social abuse.

In a word: if we believe in the God of Christ, our thought of men must be that men are ends in themselves and not instruments, or tools; at least the emphasis is to be on the end-in-itself ideal of manhood. A man may indeed be a fine

instrument for the accomplishment of a splendid purpose. It is well when we recognize and honor this fitness. Noble is the privilege of a man himself to take himself as an instrument and to pride himself on keeping fit for the fulfillment of the work which he can so royally perform. We are not saying that the individual man should take himself as an *end for himself*. He will better attain to excellence on his own account if he works for the success of some cause outside himself. This view, however, which I may justly take of myself becomes a pestilent heresy when I take it concerning my neighbor, and begin to treat him as if he were an instrument or a tool. Even if he were an instrument of the loftiest artistic fineness—for example, if he had a surpassing voice for singing—he would have a right to feel aggrieved if men spoke of him just as a musical instrument. If he were of the surest artistic genius, he would crave to have hearers discern and appreciate the personality sounding through the voice.

We must recognize the claim of men to self-expression. One charmed word in all our educational theorizing to-day is service, but the service shows itself largely in helping men to self-expression. Men are ends-in-themselves. They must be helped to self-expression. Now,

while it would be absurd to try to eliminate the thought of men as instruments altogether, it must be insisted upon that whatever doctrine or practice gets the emphasis, conscious or unconscious, on such instrumentalism into the first place is not Christian if we are to think of God as like Christ. Jesus made his contribution to human welfare not especially in specific rules governing human conduct but in the general principles which he held and acted upon as to the worth of a man in himself, and in the lengths of living and dying to which he went to sink that thought into the common consciousness. The assumptions on which Jesus wrought were sometimes more important than his direct utterances. What is the decisive argument against human slavery? Let us speak of Negro slavery simply because that was the form of slavery which called forth the most laboriously reasoned defenses. The decisive argument against slavery was not that the Negro was badly treated, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to the contrary, unimpeachable as the powerful book of Harriet Beecher Stowe no doubt was in particular instances. The decisive argument was not economic, evident though it was that slavery was ruinously expensive. On the other hand, a good deal could honestly be made out of the pleas that

the Negro had more chance in America than in Africa, that he could work in a hot climate better than a white man, that the production of cotton was essential to the world's life, that the Negro could not be regarded as in the same scale of development as the white man, that slavery had held a place in human history as long as there had been a history. Nevertheless, the whole problem ceased after a while to be a theme for formal argument and the battle passed into the realm of ideals, the decisive question being whether one man should be compelled to serve as the slave of another man. The offense in slavery was against the ideal of what a man should be. There was no logical device that could fit slavery into consistency with the advocacy of a Christly human ideal.

As Christianity would attack slavery to-day as a sin against the human ideal, so it must wage war on all persons and institutions that would treat men as other than men. Nobody can to-day sit down and draw out fully the implications of a man's being essentially a son of the God of Christ, but some implications are unmistakable even if they must be rather negatively stated. The general statement that a man should not be treated other than as a man itself carries us pretty far. How far? Well, far enough for us to see that in industry men

should not be viewed predominantly as machines, for one thing. Some phases of machine-like activity men must always go through, for the body of a man is a machine. If, though, there is to be such work, it must not consume too many hours of the day. The worker must not be so wearied at the end of the day that the more human capacities of his nature get no chance. The day must not be too long. In some respects man is an animal, but that does not warrant our treating him like a beast of burden in work hours, or compelling him to live like an animal out of work hours by giving him so scanty a wage that only the grosser animal needs are met. A leader in industry recently declared his opinion that there should be no objection to single men in industry living in any conditions they choose. The Christian has an objection to any system that houses any men in tenements or boarding houses with such crowding as to make the surroundings animal rather than human. The Christian objects to terms like "labor markets," or "labor commodity," or "hands" in so far as these carry any implications against full human worth. Moreover, the day is coming, and coming fast, when in the name of a human ideal, with that ideal reenforced in the name of the Christlike God, the church will insist on

dealing with the question as to whether we can lay hold on the youngest and best brains of a nation and blow those brains into the mud for any nationalistic or imperialistic or economic ambition whatsoever.

When these more elementary requirements have been met the weightier questions as to how so to treat a man as to encourage his larger, more positive freedom will be upon us. There is a liberty due the sons of God, because God is Christlike and because he values men on their own account. That liberty the church should follow whithersoever it leads.

XIII

THE EXPANSION OF THE MORAL SPHERE

We often hear it said that a live church must be an expanding church; that expansion is the law even of institutional life; that if a church is content to hold its own and not to move forward to conquest, it is in the way of death. All of which is manifestly sound, but we must be careful not to interpret expansion narrowly. Too often we think of new buildings and increased membership and enlarging varieties of technically religious projects as the significant expansion. All these marks of growth have their healthy meaning, but for the profoundest influence of the church in the world we must think of a definitely moral expansion, or of what moral expansion involves in our world of people.

First, we must bring more and more of our acts in relation to people under the Christian law of good will. The law of good will is always broadening in its applications if it is a living force. The moral life began with narrow codes, possibly because men touched one another in so few relationships. As more and

more actions were seen to have a moral bearing these were taken into the moral sphere. We have seen some phases of this growth before our own eyes. In the boyhood of men now living the liquor traffic was not thought to be especially deadly to society. As men have pressed closer and closer together in more intimately related activities the harmful results of this form of social evil have become only too apparent. In a small village many things might not be adjudged evil which might carry fearful possibilities in a city. To open a well on a farm might be necessary and hospitable. Like action might fitly be regarded as a crime in a city. There is inevitably a relative element in the moral life. It is our task to take more and more of our acts under the guidance of Christian conscience as we see the social consequences of these acts. Those who want an absolute system of ethics preached at all times might just as well learn that there is no such system, except in that the moral spirit is absolutely binding. Now, the relativity of ethics in this social sense is a severer burden on conscience than any absolute code could be. If we had an absolute code, we could learn it once for all. As things are we have to keep our morality up to date by the sternest effort. No task in Christian conscience is heavier than

this of making all our acts toward our fellows square with the law of Christian good will.

Second, if Christian social morality is to live, it must bring more and more persons within the law of good will. To-day this problem is not to be settled by adding new lists of individual persons to those whom we are to treat with good will. Social contacts to-day are not always immediately personal. A man is not to be judged by the number of separate persons he treats with kindliness. We touch men through institutions like business, like the vote, like the public sentiment that goes out from us to mold the lives of men. It is much more important that we have established laws of good will by which we reach groups of men than that we should have a widening circle of particular individuals whom we personally treat kindly. There is a chance of confusion here. It often happens that men whose main conduct is socially harmful are most delightful personally to increasing numbers of persons. I know a man of positive industrial genius who delights to bring an increasing number of persons under his benevolent kindliness. He is altogether charming in this benevolence, having the rare art of bestowing favors without treading upon the self-respect of the one favored. He would not harm a hair of

the head of any one purposely. Yet the man's industrial activities are carried on by plans outdated in communities which lay stress on the human values. There is no question as to personal sincerity. The difficulty is that this man substitutes good will toward persons in a personal relationship for good will worked out into the more inclusive general relationship. I have known officials with appointing authority even in churches who could be depended on to treat with the most gracious courtesy increasing numbers of personal acquaintances, and who could be depended on also to treat unjustly those outside that circle, not through intention but through sheer obliviousness. In the long run, if anything has to be sacrificed, let the personal delightfulness be sacrificed if thereby men outside the charmed circle get a better chance for justice. To drop into the realm of sport for an instant, is it not a wise provision in baseball rules—human nature being what it is—that the umpires are not encouraged by the traditions of the sport to mingle freely with the players in social relationships? For the sake of being friendly to a few it is not permissible to run the risk of being unfair to anybody. What we are seeking as Christians is a law of good will which will include everybody.

All this seems in contradiction to what we have previously said about seeking out persons as individuals, but the contradiction is only in the seeming. We are protesting against even the beginning of anything that makes for favoritism, for privileged groups, for personal pulls. My illustrations may be unfortunate as suggesting that one may not even have one's personal friendships. No such implication is intended, but what is intended is the preaching of a doctrine of human contacts which will prevent specialized devotion to a select list from overlooking the justice due a wider circle, or due anybody.

This brings us to a third reflection which may seem still further in contradiction to what has gone before—the possible expansion of the application of good will through attention to good manners. We use the term broadly not as a fussing with details of etiquette. We are not about to maintain that any portentous social consequences will follow getting the knives or the forks on the wrong side of the plate. Social life is, however, more and more the science and art of living together. We must see that even in personal contacts a thorough regard for the other man as a person ought to impel us to treat that other man with a good will which shows itself in every reasonable

consideration toward him, whether he particularly deserves such consideration or not. The wider bearings of the problem of manners appear when men begin to assume an attitude of superiority toward those of alleged social or national or racial inferiority. When we are searching for causes of social and international and racial unrest let us not leave bad manners out of the reckoning. Think of the Easter parades in some of our cities. No, dear reader from outside the city, the Easter parade does not quite mean a procession of worshipers marching and singing in gratitude at the resurrection of our Lord. It means the after-church—or before-church—display of hats and gowns and motor cars. It is the parade in which those who have make clear to the have-nots their understanding of the beatitude that blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. All this is socially wrong. For the Fifth Avenues of most cities are too near the East Sides, and the dweller on the East Side sees a flaunting of wealth on Fifth Avenue which fires him with wrath, a wrath that may not die out till it has burned too far. Material display is sheer vulgarity and bad manners, and the trouble is that display is at least unconsciously aimed at conveying a broad hint of superiority.

In the field of international and racial contacts what we call in the terminology of the day "gestures" are quite important, and gestures belong often in the realm of manners. The extreme courtesy in the correspondence between nations which regard one another as equals is commendable, but the peremptoriness of the notes of big nations to little nations leaves much to be desired. As a single illustration, the communications of the United States with the Latin-American states violate now and again all the canons of good taste. Mexico has trespassed upon the patience of the United States to an almost intolerable degree and the United States has been a model of tolerance in its own eyes, but the official communications of the United States have for years been brusque and impertinent and boorish, and the temper of a public opinion which has at bottom no desire for war with Mexico has nevertheless been so testy as to provoke war spirit on both sides of the Rio Grande. International bad manners may not be the supreme cause of wars, but even if we concede to the economist that most wars come out of scrambles for world markets and for physical existence, let it be remembered that even such admittedly mighty economic forces could not drive the nations at one another's throats if it

were not for the vulgarity and bad manners which so abound in jingoistic patriotism—a patriotism the reverse of Christian.

This leads on to another point, the duty of carrying the ideal of Christian morality into all the methods which mark the contacts of groups. In private personal life we have won the notable victory of securing practically general consent that methods must be in themselves moral. The end does not necessarily justify the means. We ask concerning a man's personal success as to how he entered into the success, whether by the open door of honesty, or whether he climbed up some other way. Unfortunately, there is not yet agreement that some current methods of intercourse between groups are in themselves wrong. Most distinguished thinkers preach to us that in the larger social contacts a frankly utilitarian ethics—the greatest material good of the greatest number—is the best theory and that the method is to be judged by its success in bringing about this greatest good. This may be allowable as practical rule of thumb, but it unlocks the gate to troops of evils: war upon and exploitation of weaker peoples by stronger fits in remarkably well with a frankly utilitarian theory. Sins against essential humanity are nevertheless sins even if they do for the

moment bring about the material greatest good of the greatest number.

Finally, another arena of conquest for Christian morals is the emphasis on the necessity of the hardest kind of hard thinking in the solution of the moral problems. Ethics is neither wholly intuitive nor wholly utilitarian; the feeling of good will ought to be absolute, but the actual expression of good will is a task for sternest thought. We have reached the height where we know that we owe good will to our fellow men without stopping to think about it. To debate whether we owe a man good will or not would argue a belated moral insight. Just what to do, however, in a particular moral situation may require all the thinking power we possess. So that there is need for the finest spirit of thoughtfulness by Christian people. It is not expected that the Christian shall himself be a technical expert in difficult moral situations which require an expert, but it is not to be expected that he shall lapse into unthinking silence just because he cannot give expert advice. One of the tricks that social reactionaries often employ to browbeat the reformer is to ask him to suggest a solution to the difficulty about which he complains. Thus overridden because he does not know what to say, the reformer ceases to cry

out. Therein he is wrong. He is to insist upon the duty of the man in the industry to supply the solution, or to find the expert who can.

But we are not thinking primarily of experts. We have in mind the necessity of the Christian's being alert and open-eyed to situations about him, of his supplying that thoughtfulness which slows down social movements when they are running too fast toward the unthinking reactionary or to the unthinking radical, the thoughtfulness which starts morally progressive campaigns when society becomes morally inert. We are not now speaking of the technical expert, but of the thoughtful citizen, who sees and recognizes the public ills which ordinary intelligence can cure, who patiently seeks for the remedies for such difficulties, and who calls for the expert when the expert is needed, all with the utmost tolerance which the urgency of the case will permit. The Christian should not ignore the command to love his God with the mind.

XIV

THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIAL IMAGINATION

THE imagination has always been regarded as the mental power especially adapted to be the organ of religious revelation. All our pictures of immortal life are in terms of imagination, from the book of Revelation on down to the sermon of last Sunday on "Heaven." Here the imagination has free, though entirely legitimate, rein. The picturings which we paint of eternal life are probably nearer the truth than our abstract philosophizings. Another lawful privilege for the Christian imagination is to make the scriptural story live again. Here there is, indeed, a fact basis which must always be observed, but the Bible, set before us as it is to-day by exact scientific study, can only be made alive by touching it with the fire of a vivid imagination. Indeed, the reconstruction by scientific study was itself due to the exercise of that wonderful force of anticipation leading to discovery which we call the scientific imagination. No scientist finds anything by just staring about. He knows what he is looking for before he begins to look.

More imperative than any of these exercises of imagination, however, is that of the social imagination, by which we mean the power of putting ourselves in the place of others and of looking at life from their standpoint, the power of making present to ourselves the working of forces which we cannot actually see. It is hard to comprehend how the law of good will as set before us by Jesus can ever be made effective except by the use of imagination. People and preachers together are engaged in a regal task when they grasp this marvelous power as an instrument for actually bringing in the kingdom of God on earth.

Let me start with a simple application—that of trying to make real to myself the outreach of the social forces which proceed from me every day. There is a fine, though now trite, appeal to the imagination in the exhortation to us to heed for a moment the number of unseen servants who wait upon us at breakfast: the farm-laborer who plants and reaps the wheat in Montana, the coffee-grower in Brazil, the sugar-planter in the West or in Cuba, the dairy-keeper, the cotton-raiser, and so on through an ever-lengthening line. Surely, the ends of the earth reach toward the humblest breakfast table. Now, let the breakfasting Christian reverse the process and ask him-

self about the outreach of his own life. If he is a worker in a factory, his work too goes to the ends of the earth; if he is an employer of laborers, his life is an important factor in their daily toil even though he may never see them. It is always refreshing to hear an employer of laborers talk about the necessity of the workingmen's being superior to their environment when that employer himself is the largest force in the environment of his own employees. When his laborers try to rise superior to himself he is likely to change his tune to something about Bolshevism. Let the Christian at the breakfast table take a few coins from his pocket and ask where his money came from. How far was that which came from speculation earned? How far was that which came from profits earned? Is there a toiler standing at a machine somewhere who earned the profits which have somehow got into the pocketbook of the wrong man? Personally, I am quite orthodox in political economy, but I must admit that these queries are disquieting. It is part of the business of the Christian Church and the Christian preacher to raise questions even at the risk of a hubbub. That is how the church works. Let us be satisfied with our own desperate lot, if need be, but how about being satisfied with the desperate lot of our fellows?

This path of imaginative effort is painful. Let us try another. How are we who sit now in comfortable places to understand the man who works with his hands for a daily wage? One of us—very comfortable—declares that he does not need imagination for such a task; he knows from memory. He was reared on a farm and worked from daylight to dark and after. He feels that it was good for him. Just what connection there is between open-air farm work and work before a blast furnace or in a coal-mine is left not indicated. Or another says that he himself worked in these exact conditions and rose above them, as all should rise. He does not mean just this, for not all can rise to promotion. Neither of these answers meets the question—the need of trying to realize the work of the daily toiler as it actually appears to that toiler. One man is looking back at his past from a smug library chair, with the harsher lines of the tasks faded out. The other man forgets that he who rises out of a day laborer's task and then says that such work is not bad for the laborer in the conditions of the heavier industries has lost his social imagination. That is why it quite often happens that the rich man's son—if he be a decent human being to start with—is more open to appeals to the social imagination than the

rich father who has fought his way up. Fighting the way up in a social competitive system is not a potent nourisher of unselfish imagination.

Some years ago there was a mine explosion at the Cherry Mine in Illinois and a half-dozen or more miners were imprisoned for over a week. A strong-willed leader kept his companions alive by the sheer force of his own moral energy until help came. I talked with that leader shortly after he had come out from the horrible experience. I asked him about his plans for the future. He told me that as soon as his strength returned he was going back to the mine. On my expressing surprise he quietly remarked, "Somebody has to do it." All his talk was that of a faithful servant of his fellow men. Now, let us set ourselves the task of trying by imagination to see what life would look like after such an experience as that of my coal-mining friend, and then ask ourselves if we would be willing after such an eight-days' entombment to go back, just because the hearths of men had to be warmed and the wheels of their engines kept turning. Yet we must try to exercise just that type of imagination if we are to put the Christian law of good will into effect.

We are striving hard to-day to contrive some

international arrangement that will do away with war. No arrangement will do good for long that does not rest down upon the cultivation of the social imagination. The simple question repeatedly and incessantly asked at every international crisis, "How does this look to the other side?" will do more to stop war—if the question is asked with any approach to good faith and good will—than the weightiest deliberations of the statesmen if that question is left out. Consider even that putting of the case for war which seems so fatalistic, the claim that the absolutely necessary raw materials of the world are not enough for all the nations and that there is no resource left but to fight to see who shall have them. Granted, for the sake of the argument, that there are not enough raw materials for the factories of all the nations. Does it follow that the nations must fight? Not if there is any degree of social imagination. For with a little exercise of that gift which makes the cost of war vivid before the war breaks out, and which enables us to see somewhat from the point of view of the nation on the other side of the table, it would appear better all around to come to some agreed-upon division of raw materials than to fight. Or take that doctrine of manifest destiny which is sometimes used by oratorical

patriots to foster war, as in John Fiske's story of the flaming orator who bounded the United States on the north by the Aurora Borealis, the east by the rising sun, and the west by the Day of Judgment. We do not hear it put just so nowadays, but the rhetoric is the outcome of a spirit that makes manifest destiny the property of some one nation. All these pan-national doctrines of ten years ago came out of such spirit. All were alike absurd. Let one nation conquer all the others. The manifest destiny of that nation will be plainly only a material destiny. Elementary imagination will show that there is no forcing of one nation's culture on another without that other nation's free acquiescence. So that we have to replace manifest destiny by manifest destinies, each nation appreciating and respecting the traditions and point of view and achievements of the others.

There is one realm in which the church is making splendid appeal to the social imagination of the world, namely, the missionary field. The old, old twaddle against Christian missionaries which we used to hear forty years ago is dead and gone, except with hopelessly belated and handicapped intellects. For the Christian Church has not only captured the imagination of Christendom with the show-

ing of the needs of the non-Christian nations, but is making evident with increasing vigor the human possibilities of these peoples. The revelation of the human possibilities in China and India and Africa by Christian missionaries is the outstanding Christian achievement of our time. If the church can still keep herself enough at the angle of view of the non-Christian peoples themselves and can respect and enforce their demand for freedom from exploitation by Western industrialism, and from well-meant efforts of Christian leaders to patronize them into a loss of self-direction, the Christian Church will have made the greatest contribution to the progress of the religion of Jesus since the days of Saint Paul. For Christianity will only begin to show its possibilities when the vast multitudes seriously embrace it.

There is another sphere for the exercise of the social imagination which belongs peculiarly to the church. If the church appraises at anywhere near full value her doctrine of immortality, she may draw somewhat on the implications of that doctrine, one of the implications being that the lives passed from earth are a host not dead at all, but living beings whose opinion is the important public opinion. The final public opinion, according to such an

implication, would be the public opinion of the skies. For the sake of those who accept in some form or other the doctrine of immortality but who feel that such a consideration as the above is altogether too ghostly, we proceed to say that on any theory the church must keep in mind the peoples who have lived and passed on, by recognizing the sacredness of their labor and by trying to conserve the worthy ideals for which they wrought. The poet, looking out over a lordly landscape of farm and meadow and village, may think of these as coming from the hand of the Divine Creator, but he must be careful not to forget that these came also from the hands of human creators. The sobering reflection in any serious mind looking on cultivated fields in an old established country is that even the soil of the country has been almost literally made and remade by generations of toilers. The soil itself is the concentrated product of human energies. Likewise with all institutions upon which the hand of man has wrought. There is a sacredness about them which becomes evident the instant we let our imaginations call up the innumerable armies of past workers. We remember that we are among the posterity for which they wrought.

Another appeal to the Christian imagination starts from regard for those to come after us.

If we are to be guided by public opinion, let us remember that the generations yet unborn are to have opinions, probably opinions more completely realized than ours can hope to be. It is a thoroughly Christian motive to seek to make our acts such that in the light of that later day the moral direction in which we are tending shall be clear without an interpreter.

The earlier Christian leaders used to urge Christians to look at life under the form of eternity. In this our day of stupendous change we would well heed the old counsel. That is to say, we should seek to hold fast the attitudes and the tendencies and the tempers which perennially move in the direction of the loftiest human ideal. Conservative and radical alike should keep these human values at the center. The duty is a legitimate implication and conclusion from our doctrine that we worship a Christlike God. If we are to attain to the supreme blessedness of eternal companionship with such a God, these human values must be conceived of as among the moral ideals of God's own life.

XV

THE SOCIAL SPIRIT AND PERSONAL PIETY

We come at last to the bearing of the interest in the wider social values on individual personal piety. It will possibly be remembered that I have all along said that the only realities in society are the persons who make up society. Anyone who wishes the salvation of society must earnestly desire the salvation of individuals, for a saved society is a society of individuals saved in their social relationships. At the center of the moral life stands the will to do right toward God and man. Jesus so knit the command to love God and the command to love man together that there is no separating them without death to the religious life. So that any sincere social worker is earnestly desirous of seeing as many men converted as possible, for conversion means the acceptance of the law of good will and loving service to man and God. We must be on our guard here. The instant we use a term like "conversion" good people of varying beliefs and tests swarm upon us to tell us the signs

and marks of conversion. We are not thinking now of any labels or standards except one—the converted man is one who has the spirit of Christ and who reveals that spirit in love to his fellow man.

This service is likely to lose its zest if the inner spirit of good will does not deepen as the years go by. So that a socially minded Christian must strive for inner seizure of and by the Christ-spirit. We have spoken of the need of expansion which carries the Christ-spirit into more and more of our acts and to more and more men until the whole trend of public opinion is made Christian. If the stream is to spread out over such spaces, the force at the central spring must increase continuously. To give the gospel this wider expansive spread the inner pressure must immensely intensify, for wider expansion necessarily requires deeper intensity. So that the servant of the church —preacher or layman—who in these days tries to make Christianity a world-force must seek to make his inner life increase in intensity at the same time that the outer reach widens. If we could use the term "entire sanctification" without arousing the condemnation of those who have been harassed beyond endurance by the professions of personal spiritual attainment not borne out by visible fruit, we would

have exactly the term we need; but let us use the term "entire Christianization." We mean such consecrated practice in doing the will of God that the nature of the doer becomes transformed. In the language of the fashionable psychology, the subconscious self would be so transformed that even the impulses would of themselves move in the direction of social helpfulness. We would be delivered from that practice of repressive self-discipline which makes the subconsciousness a dark cellar out of which all manner of wild impulses are trying to burst, and would have instead a practice of control leading out of the inner recesses intense spiritual forces "domesticated" into the system of actualities around us. A domesticated or controlled impulse is stronger than a wild impulse, just as a domesticated animal is usually stronger than a wild beast. In short, salvation for the individual must work into the whole personal nature if that individual is to help much to save the whole world.

The churchman in alarm over what might happen to theology if this attempt to save the whole world were to become widespread may reassure himself with the reflection that when the Christian purpose is set toward the larger human results the theology becomes more human to correspond. The hampering weight on

theology as such is its proneness to get away from the human. There are those who tell us that theology is among the studies to be pursued on their own account without regard to any practical consequences, like some forms of art or of mathematics. If God is like unto Christ, let us ask ourselves how much such a God would appreciate being contemplated like a work of art or of abstruse mathematics while his children were dying of starvation or war or preventable disease. Those who tell us that there are branches of knowledge to be followed only for the sake of knowledge itself do not mean just what they say, for knowledge is knowledge by a human being, and the knowledge must somehow minister to that human being. The ministry may indeed be of high quality—above any utilitarian purpose—but no matter how high the quality the ministry must have some relation to a human interest. Robert Louis Stevenson in the "Wrong Box" has carried out to ridiculous lengths the conversation of an old social investigator who had studied out with amazing ingenuity a set of social statistics of no interest to anyone. Much theological speculation has been likewise barren. It has required enormous mental energy, but has been devoid of anything that would arouse the interest of a fairly normal human

being. Much of this theology came out of a period when the church had turned away from the living interests of living men. Now, whatever else the social spirit may or may not do, it will at least keep theology human. We are mistaken if we assume that the social passion has to do only with the more material needs. Any man who works for his fellow men is anxious that they get their chance in the unfolding of their every capability. It is a positive grief to anyone who knows day laborers, for example, to think how wasteful of scientific, philosophic, artistic possibilities is the system of society under which we live.

The believer with a social passion keeps close to the central positions in theology. The struggle to better evil conditions makes him think of God in terms of relief to men. He has no time for overrefinement of theological definition. If he can keep before himself God as the Friend and Helper of men, he is content. Healthy progress in theology is quite likely to come out of thus thinking of God in terms of Christ. To be sure, the formal theologian in his study says that he too is thinking of God in human terms, that he is trying to give men a conception of God that will make God satisfy all parts of redeemed human nature. All of which is true with thinker after thinker. We

are not quite so blind to the service of theologians as to say that only the man at work in a slum district or with a group of labor leaders or in a hall of legislature is serving his fellow man. We have the highest esteem for the theologians, but we insist that the fundamental data on which they study should come out of the struggles of those who are in practical effort expressing their belief in the Christ-like God. Otherwise the theological mind is likely to run off into the empty speculations which have only an abstractly intellectual foundation. Without attempting to trespass upon the theologian's prerogative may we say that if we are to hold fast to the God of the New Testament the moral rather than the metaphysical attributes must be uppermost in God. Better, in a word, sacrifice some of God's power than to sacrifice any of his moral fullness. There are those who will have it that God's omnipotence must be maintained even in face of the demands of the human will for freedom. If we have to sacrifice one or the other, better let the divine omnipotence go. This is a suggestion of what we mean when we speak of the passion for men as keeping the human values in the first place. The man hard at work to lift men up into the true freedom is not likely to concern himself overmuch

to preserve the metaphysical omnipotence of God. He would sooner have an all-righteous and all-loving Father as revealed in Christ than an omnipotent Sovereign. If God is to create men at all, he must be willing to make some sacrifices in himself, no matter how far they reach. In the doctrine of the Christlike God sacrifice is the first and the last word for God himself.

Speaking of sacrifice leads naturally to the next remark, namely, that the experience of social effort is one of cross-bearing, and the cross-bearing in every human aspect is like the cross-bearing of the Christ. Think of this parallelism for a moment. To begin with, the suffering of Christ was that involved in putting up with the imperfections and inadequacies of those for whom he was working. What often wears out the social enthusiasm of the social fighter who does not base his battle on the Christ-view is just the sheer abundance of human imperfection. The worker meets so much of unresponsiveness, so much of mixed motive, so much willingness to make moral compromise, so much of ingratitude and positive betrayal—in fine, so much of general "seaminess" in the life with which he works that after a while his enthusiasm dies down. Jesus prayed: "Forgive them, for they know not

what they do." This was divine charity indeed, but human ignorance itself was likely one of the most humiliating and distressing features of life as Jesus saw it.

Another feature of cross-bearing like that of Jesus is the type of persecution the social fighter meets. A socially minded Christian, like his Master, seldom gets a chance to fight out his battles on the main issues. The charge of blasphemy brought against Jesus had no shade of relation to the main reasons for which the chief priests brought Jesus to death. The priests were not so sensitive to blasphemy as to desire the death of Jesus on that account alone. Jesus had forced an issue that imperiled the places and powers of the priests; but the issue was never joined on that plane. Jesus said to his disciples, "Blessed are ye when men *revile* you." Reviling is the favorite method of attack on a social prophet who gets close enough to a wrong against the people to make the perpetrators of the wrong wince. Almost never is such an issue met in terms of the issue itself. Let a political idealist arise to lead his party along lofty moral paths. The battle seldom wages around the idealistic measures themselves. It takes the form of revilings against the leader. I do not now recall a leader in American political reform free from

attack by his enemies for drunkenness or licentiousness or lack of personal integrity. The plight of the more distinctively social prophet is even worse. The Jews called Jesus a blasphemer because that was the worst thing they could say about him. If any man leads in overthrowing an evil like the liquor traffic or an industrial cruelty, or pleads for a better chance for men, women and children where money interests are against such chance, he might just as well make up his mind that whatever is the worst that his enemies can say of him, *that* they will say. After all allowance for the foolish martyrs who by sheer excess of folly bring an unnecessary martyrdom on themselves it must not be forgotten that the wisest, most tactful defender of human rights will have to take his share of cross-bearing.

Again, the suffering of the social benefactor, like that of his Lord, is vicarious. On the human side he is bearing in himself the sins of mankind, the sins of a social system for which he is not responsible; and the suffering which he undergoes is to free others from suffering. Merely personal distresses are not necessarily the Christian bearing of the cross, for such cross-bearing looks toward lightening the woes of others. Nor is there any virtue in suffering for suffering's own sake. Cross-bearing, to be

Christly cross-bearing, must have this large social reference and implication. Moreover, the social spirit has an effect on the prayer life of the Christian who has come to the social point of view, an effect both on the quantity and quality of prayer, if such terms are here permissible. For the social worker knows that the divine force which redeems society can only arrive through human agencies. Social results are wrought by men upon men. If man's inhumanity to man has made countless thousands mourn, redemption can come only through man's humanity to man. The Christian worker prays to get into communion with God, that from that communion there may be released in himself those human forces which will heal and soothe. This means the incessant cultivation, not necessarily of petition, but of the prayer attitude and the prayer spirit. The social prayer must literally be without ceasing. Moreover, the prayer takes on that finest form which we call intercessory. It is not for the one praying himself. It is for others, and that "for others" is the sign of distinctively Christian prayer.

We have said repeatedly that every system must finally be judged by its results upon him who practices the system. We are willing to have a social Christianity judged by its re-

sults on those who practice it. We believe that the practice of the search for the larger and finer human values in social expressions of Christianity will make saints of the seekers. The main goal is the help of those whose lot is hard, but from this help results also the sanctification of the helpers. Again, as soon as a man's lot is improved by the rescue and uplift which come through Christianity it is the duty of that man to seek to help others. Thus the number of saints grows. The truly elect in the kingdom of heaven are those laboring for the election of their fellows. The idea of election and salvation must be constantly expanded. From those wider expansions new streams must flow back upon the lives of the individuals in society. The social movement starts from an expansive force in the life of individuals. It must return upon individuals to deepen the intensities at the personal centers, for when the last word is said, it is at those personal centers that the spirit of religion abides.